



# THE POEMS OF ALFRED

LORD TENNYSON

1830-1858



LONDON  
GRANT RICHARDS

48 LEICESTER SQUARE

1902

•

*'The Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson,'  
were first printed in the World's Classics  
in April 1901, and reprinted in March  
1902.*

Edinburgh: T. and A. CONSTABLE, (late) Printers to Her Majesty

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>EARLY POEMS—</b>	
Claribel: A Melody, . . . . .	1
Lilian, . . . . .	2
Isabel, . . . . .	3
Mariana, . . . . .	4
To —, . . . . .	6
Madeline, . . . . .	7
Song—The Owl, . . . . .	9
Second Song—To the same, . . . . .	9
Recollections of the Arabian Nights, . . . . .	10
Ode to Memory, . . . . .	14
Song, . . . . .	18
Adeline, . . . . .	18
A Character, . . . . .	20
The Poet, . . . . .	21
The Poet's Mind, . . . . .	23
The Sea-Fairies, . . . . .	24
The Deserted House, . . . . .	26
The Dying Swan, . . . . .	27
A Dirge, . . . . .	28
Love and Death, . . . . .	30
The Ballad of Oriana, . . . . .	30
Circumstance, . . . . .	33
The Merman, . . . . .	33
The Mermaid, . . . . .	35
Sonnet to J. M. K., . . . . .	36
The Lady of Shalott, . . . . .	37
Mariana in the South, . . . . .	42
Eleanore, . . . . .	44
The Miller's Daughter, . . . . .	48
Fatima, . . . . .	55



	PAGE
EARLY POEMS— <i>continued</i> .	
Cenone, . . . . .	57
The Sisters, . . . . .	64
To —, . . . . .	65
The Palace of Art, . . . . .	66
Lady Clara Vere de Vere, . . . . .	75
The May Queen, . . . . .	77
New-Year's Eve, . . . . .	80
Conclusion, . . . . .	83
The Lotos-Eaters, . . . . .	86
Choric Song, . . . . .	87
A Dream of Fair Women, . . . . .	92
Margaret, . . . . .	101
The Blackbird, . . . . .	103
Death of the Old Year, . . . . .	104
To J. S., . . . . .	105
The Goose, . . . . .	112

#### ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS—

The Epic, . . . . .	115
Morte D'Arthur, . . . . .	116
The Gardener's Daughter ; or, The Pictures, . . . . .	124
Dora, . . . . .	132
Audley Court, . . . . .	136
Walking to the Mail, . . . . .	138
Edwin Morris ; or, The Lake, . . . . .	141
St. Simeon Stylites, . . . . .	146
The Talking Oak, . . . . .	152
Love and Duty, . . . . .	161
The Golden Year, . . . . .	164
Ulysses, . . . . .	166
Locksley Hall, . . . . .	168
Godiva, . . . . .	180
The Two Voices, . . . . .	182
The Day-Dream, . . . . .	198
Amphion, . . . . .	208
St. Agnes' Eve, . . . . .	211

# CONTENTS

vii

	PAGE
ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS— <i>continued.</i>	
Sir Galahad, . . . . .	212
Edward Gray, . . . . .	214
Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue: Made at the Cock, . . . . .	215
To —, after reading a Life and Letters, . . . .	222
To E. L., on his Travels in Greece, . . . . .	223
Lady Clare, . . . . .	224
The Lord of Burleigh, . . . . .	227
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere: A Fragment,	230
A Farewell, . . . . .	231
The Beggar Maid, . . . . .	232
The Vision of Sin, . . . . .	232
The Eagle: Fragment, . . . . .	240
The Poet's Song, . . . . .	241
THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY, . . . . .	242
IN MEMORIAM A. H. H. . . . .	333
Will, . . . . .	423
MAUD, . . . . .	424
The Brook: An Idyl, . . . . .	472
The Letters, . . . . .	478
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, . . .	480
The Daisy; written at Edinburgh, . . . . .	488
To the Rev. F. D. Maurice, . . . . .	491
The Charge of the Light Brigade, . . . . .	493



# EARLY POEMS

## CLARIBEL

### A MELODY

#### I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone :  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

## TENNYSON'S POEMS

## LILIAN

## I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Clasps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

## II

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :  
So innocent-arch, so cunning simple,  
From beneath her gather'd wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughters dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;  
Then away she flies.

## III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL

## I

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

## II

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;  
The laws of marriage character'd in gold  
Upon the blanch'd tablets of her heart;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,  
Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;  
A courage to endure and to obey;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

## III

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it absorbs  
With swifter movement and in purer light

The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—  
 Shadow forth thee:—the world hath not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

### MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'  
*—Measure for Measure.*

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low  
 Came to her : without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
 About the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'



All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then, said she, ' I am very dreary  
 He will not come,' she said ;  
 She wept, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 Oh God, that I were dead !'

TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
 The knots that tangle human creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

## MADELINE

7

### II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
Can do away that ancient lie ;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

### III

Weak truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athlete bold,  
And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;  
Like that strange angel which of old,  
Until the breaking of the light,  
Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.

## MADELINE

### I

Thou art not steep'd in golden languors,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of flitting change.

## II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles : but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
     Who may know ?  
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
     Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
     From one another,  
     Each to each is dearest brother ;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
     Momently shot into each other.  
     All the mystery is thine ;  
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
     Ever varying Madeline.

## III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
     By veering passion fann'd,  
     About thee breaks and dances ;  
 When I would kiss thy hand,  
 The flush of anger'd shame  
     O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown :  
 But when I turn away,  
 Thou, willing me to stay,  
     Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;  
     But, looking fixedly the while,  
     All my bounding heart entanglest  
     In a golden-netted smile ;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss

Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angerly;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG—THE OWL

## I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG

## TO THE SAME

## I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew ;  
 But I cannot mimick it ;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
   Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
   Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
     With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
     Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free,  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
   The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old ;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
   For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue :  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
 And broider'd sofas on each side :  
   In sooth it was a goodly time,  
   For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moonlit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm.  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillels musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge

From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
    With disks and tiars, fed the time  
    With odour in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he : but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
    Apart from place, withholding time,  
    But flattering the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grotts  
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
    Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,

Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time,  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.



Then stole I up, and trancedly  
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;  
     The sweetest lady of the time,  
     Well worthy of the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
     Sole star of all that place and time,  
     I saw him—in his golden prime,  
     THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

## ODE TO MEMORY

### I

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present ; oh, haste,  
     Visit my low desire !  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

### II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light  
     Of orient state.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,  
When she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
Which in wintertide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.

## III

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,  
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind  
Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the year).  
Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.  
The eddying of her garments caught from thee  
The light of thy great presence ; and the cope  
Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :  
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.  
O strengthen me, enlighten me  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV

Come forth I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines  
     Unto mine inner eye,  
     Divinest Memory !  
 Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
 Which ever sounds and shines  
     A pillar of white light upon the wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :  
 Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,  
 The seven elms, the poplars four  
 That stand beside my father's door,  
 And chiefly from the brook that loves  
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
     In every elbow and turn,  
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.  
     O ! hither lead thy feet !  
 Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,  
     Upon the ridged wolds,  
 When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud  
 Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
 What time the amber morn  
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

## v

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
     To the young spirit present  
     When first she is wed ;  
     And like a bride of old  
     In triumph led,  
     With music and sweet showers  
     Of festal flowers,  
 Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
 Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
     In setting round thy first experiment  
     With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;  
 Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
 And foremost in thy various gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
Upon the storied walls ;  
For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labour of thine early days :  
No matter what the sketch might be ;  
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;  
Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
Or opening upon level plots  
Of crowned lilies, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender :  
Whither in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.  
My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne '  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

## I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :  
    To himself he talks ;  
For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh  
    In the walks ;  
    Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
Of the mouldering flowers :  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
    Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
    An hour before death ;  
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
    And the breath  
    Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
And the year's last rose,  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
    Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## ADELINE

## I

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adeline,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair ;

Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

## III

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone:  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dews?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?  
Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-dropping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, 'The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things.  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold :  
Upon himself himself did feed :  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

## THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above ;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,



Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded  
The secretest walks of fame :  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
Wisdom, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word  
She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND

## I

Vex not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it,  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

## II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.  
It would fall to the ground if you came in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder :  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,  
And it sings a song of undying love ;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,  
You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ;  
So keep where you are ; you are foul with sin ;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

## THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest  
To little harps of gold ; and while they mused,  
Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering over the lea:

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells

High over the full-toned sea:

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,

Come hither to me and to me:

Hither, come hither and frolic and play;

Here it is only the mew that wails;

We will sing to you all the day:

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,

For here are the blissful downs and dales,

And merrily merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on the land

Over the islands free;

And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;

Hither, come hither and see;

And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,

And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be:

O hither, come hither, and be our lords,

For merry brides are we:

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words:

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten

With pleasure and love and jubilee:

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten

When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore

All the world o'er, all the world o'er?

Whither away? listen and stay: mariner, mariner,  
fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

## I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide  
Careless tenants they !

## II

All within is dark as night :  
In the windows is no light ;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

## III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us !

## THE DYING SWAN

## I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
    An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
    And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
    And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
    Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
    And far thro' the marish green and still  
    The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

## III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,

And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

### I

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
Let them rave.  
Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny ?  
Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
The woodbine and eglatere  
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear  
Let them rave.  
Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
The fair bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII

Wild words wander here and there ;  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused :  
But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.



## LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight :  
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these walks are  
mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;  
Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is thine :  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana :

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
    Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
    Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
    Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
    Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
    Oriana :  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
    Oriana :  
She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
    Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
    Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
    Oriana :  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
    Oriana :  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
    Oriana !  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
    Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
    Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
    Oriana.  
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
    Oriana ;  
But I was down upon my face,  
    Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
Oriana :

What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,  
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
Oriana.

Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
Oriana !

O happy thou that liest low,  
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,  
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
     Oriana,  
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou liest beneath a greenwood tree,  
 I dare not die and come to thee,  
     Oriana.  
 I hear the roaring of the sea,  
     Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour villages  
 Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas ;  
 Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;  
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;  
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-  
     tower,  
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;  
 Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;  
 So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

## THE MERMAN

## I

Who would be  
 A merman bold,  
 Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne ?

## II

I would be a merman bold ;  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;  
But at night I would roam abroad and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;  
And holding them back by their flowing locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

## III

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above us afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic night—  
Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
All night, merrily, merrily ;  
They would pelt me with starry spangles and  
shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands between,  
All night, merrily, merrily :  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almondine :  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.  
Oh ! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID

## I

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

## II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,  
    Low adown, low adown.  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
    Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
    Springing alone  
    With a shrill inner sound,  
    Over the throne  
    In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the  
    gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III

But at night I would wander away, away,  
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and play  
With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;  
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,  
Whose silvery spikes are highest the sea.  
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap  
From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells ;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
But the king of them all would carry me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast ;  
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee ;  
Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily ;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark

The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle embowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken sail'd  
    Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott ?



Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to tower'd Camelot :  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott.'

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
     Winding down to Camelot :  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two :  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
                    And music, went to Camelot :  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
                    The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
                    Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field  
                    Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
                    As he rode down to Camelot :  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
                    Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
                    As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
                    Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trod ;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
     As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
     Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces thro' the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
     She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
 The pale yellow woods were waning,  
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
     Over tower'd Camelot ;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—  
 Like some bold seër in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance—  
 With a glassy countenance  
     Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot ;  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer ;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot :  
But Lancelot mused a little space ;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face ;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.'

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shines,  
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines :  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear,  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.  
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
'Madonna, sad is night and morn';  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;  
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load.'  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.  
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,  
'That won his praises night and morn?'  
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming salt ;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And runlets babbling down the glen.  
 She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
 And murmuring, as at night and morn,  
 She thought, ' My spirit is here alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :  
 She felt he was and was not there.  
 She woke : the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white ;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
 She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or morn,  
 ' Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
 Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For ' Love,' they said, ' must needs be true,  
 To what is loveliest upon earth.'  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say,  
 ' But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore.'  
 ' O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,  
 ' And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
 Is this the end to be left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn !'

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
   'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
 And flaming downward over all  
   From heat to heat the day decreased,  
   And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall.  
   'The day to night,' she made her moan,  
   'The day to night, the night to morn,  
 And day and night I am left alone  
   To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
 There came a sound as of the sea ;  
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
 And lean'd upon the balcony.  
 There all in spaces rosy-bright  
   Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
   And deepening thro' the silent spheres,  
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
   And weeping then she made her moan,  
   'The night comes on that knows not morn,  
 When I shall cease to be all alone,  
   To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

## ELEÄNORE.

### I

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
   Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,  
   For there is nothing here,  
 Which, from the outward to the inward brought,  
 Moulded thy baby thought.  
 Far off from human neighbourhood,  
   Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.

Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Thro' half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—  
A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III

Who may minister to thee?  
Summer herself should minister  
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
On golden salvers, or it may be,  
Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
Grape-thicken'd, from the light, and blinded  
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower  
Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
And the crag that fronts the Even,  
All along the shadowing shore,  
Crimsons over an inland mere,  
Eleänore !



## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore  
     The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
     Eleänore?  
     The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
     Eleänore?  
     Every turn and glance of thine,  
     Every lineament divine,  
     Eleänore,  
 And the steady sunset glow,  
 That stays upon thee? For in thee  
     Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
     From one censer, in one shrine,  
     Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
     To an unheard melody,  
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
     Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
     Who may express thee, Eleänore?

## V

I stand before thee, Eleänore;  
     I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more.  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
     Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
     The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
     So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,

To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleänore !

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,  
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light :  
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain  
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,  
And draw itself to what it was before ;  
So full, so deep, so slow,  
Thought seems to come and go  
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
Grow golden all about the sky ;  
In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
Losing his fire and active might  
In a silent meditation,  
Falling into a still delight,  
And luxury of contemplation :  
As waves that up a quiet cove  
Rolling slide, and lying still  
Shadow forth the banks at will :  
Or sometimes they swell and move,  
Pressing up against the land  
With motions of the outer sea :

And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleānore.

## VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
   Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;  
   Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
   I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
   My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
   While I muse upon thy face ;  
   And a languid fire creeps  
   Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon  
   From thy rose-red lips my name  
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
   With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
   My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
   I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
   I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.  
   I die with my delight, before  
   I hear what I would hear from thee ;  
   Yet tell my name again to me,  
   *I would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleānore.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
 His double chin, his portly size,  
 And who that knew him could forget  
   The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?

The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire :  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan ;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die ;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye ;

The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement's edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge :  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright—  
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death :  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below ;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;  
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits !'  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
'O that I were beside her now !  
O will she answer if I call ?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with may,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire :  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher ;  
And I was young—too young to wed :  
'Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said :  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.

I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well ;  
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears  
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see ;  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at last she spoke of me ;  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles at her ear :  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest :  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.



A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—  
 True love interprets—right alone.  
 His light upon the letter dwells,  
 For all the spirit is his own.  
 So, if I waste words now, in truth  
 You must blame Love. His early rage  
 Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
 And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
 Like mine own life to me thou art,  
 Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
 Do make a garland for the heart :  
 So sing that other song I made,  
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
 The day, when in the chestnut shade  
 I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
 Can he pass, and we forget ?  
 Many suns arise and set.  
 Many a chance the years beget.  
 Love the gift is Love the debt.  
 Even so.  
 Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
 Love is made a vague regret.  
 Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
 Idle habit links us yet.  
 What is love ? for we forget :  
 Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
 Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;  
 My other dearer life in life,  
 Look thro' my very soul with thine !  
 Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
 May those kind eyes for ever dwell !  
 They have not shed a many tears,  
 Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part  
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before ;  
Although the loss that brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee ;  
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds :  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below :  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
    I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth :  
    I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
    Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
    O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
    With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
    My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.  
    In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
    Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
    Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
    And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
    My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,  
    Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
    I will grow round him in his place,  
    Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
    Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ÆNONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine  
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine  
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
 Stands up and takes the morning: but in front  
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
 Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass:  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the cicada sleeps.  
 The purple flowers droop: the golden bee  
 Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.  
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
 And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves,  
That house the gold-crown'd snake ! O mountain  
    brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-  
    hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt  
    eyes  
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's ;  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow  
    brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,

That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
Came down upon my heart.

‘ “My own Ænone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n  
‘For the most fair,’ would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added “This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestioned, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.  
 Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
 "Which in all action is the end of all ;  
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour  
     crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-  
     born,  
 A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of  
     power

Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood,  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power, (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : “ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circl'd thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom.”

“ Here she ceased,

And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, “ O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas !” but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.



Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whispered in his ear, "I promised thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."  
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower ;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is  
she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,

My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn,  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist  
 Sweep through them ; never see them overlaid  
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
 And bred this change ; that I might speak my  
     mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die,  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes  
Across me : never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

### THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
O the Earl was fair to see.

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;  
I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,

A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
 That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
 In all varieties of mould and mind)  
 And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,  
 Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
 That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three  
       sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
 Living together under the same roof,  
 And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
 And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
 Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
 Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
 Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
 Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
 Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

### THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
       Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
 I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
       Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,  
       I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
 From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
       Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
       The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
 My soul would live alone unto herself  
       In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,  
       'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade  
       Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily :  
‘Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.’

Four courts I made, East, West and South and  
North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods.  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain stream’d below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem’d  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odour steam’d  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, ‘And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?’

For that sweet incense rose and never fail’d,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light ærial gallery, golden-rail’d,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

: : : : :

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves,  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
 As fit for every mood of mind,  
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,  
 Not less than truth design'd.

:        :        :        .

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,  
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
 An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,  
 A group of Houris bow'd to see  
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
 In some fair space of sloping greens  
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
 And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
 To list a footfall ere he saw  
 The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
 Of wisdom and of law.



Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd  
 And many a tract of palm and rice,  
 The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
 A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
 From off her shoulder backward borne ;  
 From one hand droop'd a crocus ; one hand grasp'd  
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
 Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
 Not less than life, design'd.

: : : :

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;  
 And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;  
 And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;  
 A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
 Many an arch high up did lift,  
 And angels rising and descending met  
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colour'd flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
    Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
    Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,  
    And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night divine  
    Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
    Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
    In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,  
    'I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
    Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!  
    O shapes and hues that please me well!  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
    My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,  
    I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
    That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
    They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
    And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,  
    And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;  
    And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
 I care not what the sects may brawl.  
 I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all.'

: : : : :

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
 Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so three years  
 She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
 Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
 God, before whom ever lie bare  
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight,  
 The airy hand confusion wrought,  
 Wrote 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
 The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
 Fell on her, from which mood was born  
 Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood  
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,  
 'My spacious mansion built for me,  
 Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
 Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
 And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand;  
Left on the shore; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world  
One deep, deep silence all!'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, 'I have found  
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.'

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
'Of me you shall not win renown :  
'You thought to break a country heart  
'For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that doats on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.

You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The grand old gardener and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :  
You pine among your halls and towers :  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If Time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year ;



Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest  
merriest day;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none  
so bright as mine;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and  
Caroline:  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they  
say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never  
wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to  
break:  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and  
garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-  
tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him  
yesterday,—  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in  
white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of  
light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they  
say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can  
never be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that  
to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer  
day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made  
the Queen ;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from  
far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy  
bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet  
cuckoo-flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in  
swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the  
meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as  
they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the  
livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and  
still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance  
and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early,\* call me early,  
mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest  
day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

### NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother  
dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no  
more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my  
peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall  
never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the  
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a  
merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me  
Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel  
copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white  
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on  
the pane :  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on  
high :  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-  
tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer .  
o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering  
grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of  
mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the  
hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world  
is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the  
waning light  
You 'll never see me more in the long gray fields at  
night ;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow  
cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush  
in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-  
thorn shade,  
And you 'll come sometimes and see me where I am  
lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when  
you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant  
grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me  
now ;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere  
I go ;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be  
wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another  
child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-  
place :  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon  
your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you  
say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far  
away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight  
for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the  
door ;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be grow-  
ing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden  
more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush  
that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Good night, sweet mother : call me before the day is  
born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother  
dear.

## CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the  
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's  
here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the  
skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that  
cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers  
that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long  
to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed  
sun,  
And now it seems so hard to stay, and yet His will be  
done !  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words  
of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet  
me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver  
head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my  
bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the  
sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will  
let me in

Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that  
could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-  
watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and  
morning meet:  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in  
mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels  
call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was  
over all;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to  
roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my  
soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie  
dear;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt  
resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed.  
And then did something speak to me—I know not  
what was said;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my  
mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for  
them: it's mine.'  
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for  
a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the window-  
bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among  
the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have  
to go.

And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past  
away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to  
fret;  
There's many worthier than I, would make him  
happy yet.  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his  
wife;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire  
of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a  
glow;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them  
I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light  
may shine—  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day  
is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the  
sun—  
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we  
such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie  
come—



To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your  
breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary  
are at rest.

### THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,  
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'  
In the afternoon they came unto a land,  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, ' We will return no more ; '  
And all at once they sang, ' Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam.

## CHORIC SONG

## I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm !'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of  
things?

## III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,

And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful  
ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy.  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass'

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;  
For surely now our household hearths are cold:  
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us blowing lowly)  
 With half-dropt eyelids still,  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine—  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the  
     pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone :  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotus-  
     dust is blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge  
     was seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foami-  
     fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal  
mind,  
In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world :  
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted  
lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,  
and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful  
song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are  
strong ;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the  
soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring  
toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and  
oil ;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd  
down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys  
dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
and oar ;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
    '*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
    His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
    Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
    With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
    Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
    Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
    I saw wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
    The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
    Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame and wrong,  
    And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs .  
    And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
    Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
    Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
    Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elmtree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
green,  
New from its silken sheath.



The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in  
dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime  
'Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillier than chisell'd marble, standing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.'

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

‘I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :  
No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where’er I came  
I brought calamity.’

‘No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,’  
I answer’d free ; and turning I appeal’d  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws ;  
‘My youth,’ she said, ‘was blasted with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

‘I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears .  
My father held his hand upon his face ;  
I, blinded with my tears,

‘Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

‘The high masts flicker’d as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, waver’d, and the shore ;  
The bright death quiver’d at the victim’s throat ;  
Touch’d ; and I knew no more.’

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
‘I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl’d by the wind, had roll’d me deep below,  
Then when I left my home.’

Her slow full words sank thro’ the silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, ‘Come here,  
That I may look on thee.’

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
    One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black dyes,  
    Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :  
    'I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
    Once, like the moon, I made

    'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
    According to my humour ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
    That makes my only woe.

    'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
    One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
    Where is Mark Antony?

    'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
    On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
    And flooded at our nod.

    'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
    Lamps which outburn'd Canopus. O my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
    The flattery and the strife,

    'And the wild kiss, when fresh from wars alarms,  
    My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
    Contented there to die !

    'And there he died : and when I heard my name  
    Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.  
    What else was left? look here !'

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying rob'd and crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird,  
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine;  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : ' Heaven heads the count of  
crimes  
With that wild oath.' She render'd answer high :  
' Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

' Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

' My God, my land, my father—these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

' And I went mourning, " No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song.

' Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where I stood :  
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

'Alas ! alas !' a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me : 'Turn and look on me :  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor,  
O me, that I should ever see the light!  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:  
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely died,  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping  
beams,  
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!  
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest  
Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

## MARGARET

## I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
From all things outward you have won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun.  
The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
Like the tender amber round,  
Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
To hear the murmur of the strife,  
But enter not the toil of life.  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight.



You are the evening-star, alway  
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

## III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
     Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
     Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatalet,  
     Just ere the falling axe did part  
     The burning brain from the true heart,  
     Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
     Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
     You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
     Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
     Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
     And less aërially blue,  
     But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me speak  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :

The sun is just about to set,  
The arching limes are tall and shady,  
And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
Where all day long you sit between  
Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
Look out below your bower-eaves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when young

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

### DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love.  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim !  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.

To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns low  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :

What is it we can do for you ?

Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.

Alack ! our friend is gone.

Close up his eyes ; tie up his chin :

Step from the corpse, and let him in

That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

### TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth :  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
' Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say 'God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind ;  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease ;  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

---

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom broadens slowly down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

---

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.



But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :  
Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
But gentle words are always gain :  
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise :  
It grows to guerdon after-days :  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
Not master'd by some modern term ;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that, which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school ;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head ;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

### THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together ;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder :  
But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note !'  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning ;  
So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder ;

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger !'

# ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS

## THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way  
At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then,)

What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he  
burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—  
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or else  
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:  
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,  
'Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
Nor we those times; and why should any man  
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine  
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,'  
Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,  
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;  
For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen: then at my request  
He brought it; and the poet little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonnese about their Lord,  
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,

A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang



Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done?  
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The king is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame were lost.

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time.

And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!

Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an  
arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :  
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear 'Quick, quick !  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them  
rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony,  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
And to the barge they came. There those three  
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his  
hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his  
lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
' Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge : '  
' The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?

I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy  
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

---

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell :  
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
And waked with silence, grunted ' Good ! ' but we  
Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;  
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
'There now—that's nothing !' drew a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue ;  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
'Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—'come again, and thrice as fair ;'  
And, further inland, voices echoed—'come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;

OR

### THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little ;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing ! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life ? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
'When will *you* paint like this ?' and I replied,  
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)  
'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love unper-  
ceived,

A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those  
eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'  
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The Gardener's daughter : trust me, after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece,'  
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells ;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock ;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.



In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was  
he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of Heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel. And now,  
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)  
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,  
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,

And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;  
The redcap whistled ; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,  
'Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they  
sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song ?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?  
And would they praise the heavens for what they  
have ?'

And I made answer, ' Were there nothing else  
For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
That only love were cause enough for praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought  
And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd  
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned :  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the house.  
He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
He cried, 'Look ! look !' Before he ceased I turn'd,  
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had  
caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—  
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—  
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.  
 A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
 Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers  
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
 Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,  
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
 And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !  
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,  
 And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
 And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
 As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
 She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose  
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd  
 Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
 And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
 This murmur broke the stillness of the air  
 Which brooded round about her :

‘ Ah, one rose,  
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,  
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
 Less exquisite than thine.’

She look'd : but all  
 Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd  
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
 Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
 And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound  
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips  
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,  
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
 And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
 In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there

Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the live-long way  
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of Art.  
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,  
A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,  
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of life  
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice  
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such  
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.  
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal  
The sliding season : all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.  
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,  
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor  
storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
Light pretexts drew me : sometimes a Dutch love  
For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city-rooms ; or fruits and cream  
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more  
A word could bring the colour to my cheek ;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;  
Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd :  
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;

And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,  
Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I will,'  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
From thence thro' all the worlds : but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows : from them clash'd  
The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we play'd ;  
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,  
The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering 'I am thine.'

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
Merged in completion ? Would you learn at full  
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades  
Beyond all grades develop'd ? and indeed  
I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
But while I mus'd came Memory with sad eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
 And while I mus'd, Love with knit brows went by,  
 And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
 And spake, ' Be wise : not easily forgiven  
 Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar  
 The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
 Of that which came between, more sweet than each,  
 In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
 That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,  
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
 And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
 And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars ;  
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river shores,  
 And in the hollows ; or as once we met  
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
 Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
 And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul ;  
 Make thine heart ready with thine eyes : the time  
 Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
 As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
 My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
 The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
 Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

## DORA

WITH Farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
And often thought 'I'll make them man and wife.'  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth,  
because  
He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son :  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora ; take her for your wife ;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
For many years.' But William answer'd short ;  
'I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :  
'You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;  
Consider, William : take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
And never more darken my doors again.'  
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,

And hired himself to work within the fields ;  
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ;  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought  
' It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !'  
And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William ? then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :

' I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,



But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;  
And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said ; ' Where were you yesterday ?  
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?'  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's child !'  
' And did I not,' said Allan, ' did I not  
Forbid you, Dora ?' Dora said again ;  
' Do with me as you will, but take the child  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'  
And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you !  
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;  
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud  
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,  
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head.  
Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
He says that he will never see me more.'  
Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be,

That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back ;  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him ; and the lad stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

'O Father !—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus :  
"God bless him !" he said, "and may he never  
know

The troubles I have gone thro' !" Then he turn'd  
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
His father's memory ; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before.

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face

By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—  
 ' I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd  
     my son.  
 I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.  
 May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.  
 Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about  
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.  
 And all the man was broken with remorse ;  
 And all his love came back a hundred-fold ;  
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,  
 Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
 Within one house together ; and as years  
 Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

### AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room  
 For love or money. Let us picnic there  
 At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
 Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
 To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
 To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
 And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'  
 Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,  
 And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
 To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
 The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep  
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
 The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all  
 The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
 And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
 With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
 And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat and eat  
And talk'd old matters over ; who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the hall :  
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
The fourfield system, and the price of grain ;  
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
And came again together on the king  
With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud ;  
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

‘ Oh ! who would fight and march and counter-  
march,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
And shovell'd up into a bloody trench  
Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

‘ Oh ! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

‘ Who'd serve the state ? for if I carved my  
name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands ;  
The sea wastes all : but let me live my life.

‘ Oh ! who would love ? I woo'd a woman once,  
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
Turns from the sea : but let me live my life.’

He sang his song, and I replied with mine :  
I found it in a volume, all of songs,

Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
I set the words, and added names I knew.

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me :  
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm ;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her  
breast :

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip :  
I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return : I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,  
My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,  
And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose  
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills ; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
The town was hush'd beneath us : lower down  
The bay was oily-calm ; the harbour-buoy  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

### WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walked. How fresh the meadows  
look  
Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.

Is yon plantation where this by-way joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?

No, not the County Member's with the vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:

But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,

Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face

From all men, and commercing with himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life—

That keeps us all in order more or less—

And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—

*Delicto*: but his house, for so they say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)  
 'Oh, well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—  
 Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind ; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once :  
 A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh, yet but I remember, ten years back—  
 'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—  
 You could not light upon a sweeter thing ;  
 A body slight and round, and like a pear  
 In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
 Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
 As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that  
 loved  
 At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.  
 She was the daughter of a cottager,  
 Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,  
 New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd  
 To what she is : a nature never kind !  
 Like men, like manners : like breeds like, they say.  
 Kind nature is the best : those manners next  
 That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
 Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,  
 And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
 I once was near him, when his bailiff brought  
 A chartist pike. You should have seen him wince  
 As from a venomous thing ; he thought himself  
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
 Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir, you know  
 That these two parties still divide the world—  
 Of those that want, and those that have : and still  
 The same old sore breaks out from age to age  
 With much the same result. Now I myself,  
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
 Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school—a college in the South :  
 There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his fruit,  
 His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for *us* ;  
 We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
 With meditative grunts of much content,  
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.  
 By night we dragg'd her to the college tower  
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
 With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,  
 And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.  
 Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
 And but for daily loss of one she loved,  
 As one by one we took them—but for this—  
 As never sow was higher in this world—  
 Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?  
 We took them all, till she was left alone  
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.*

Not they.

*John.*

\* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are  
 sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the world,  
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,  
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
 To Pity—more from ignorance than will.  
 But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
 That we shall miss the mail : and here it comes  
 With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand  
 As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS

### OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
 My one Oasis in the dust and drouth



Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing : curves of mountain, bridge,  
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,  
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd me ;  
And well his words became him : was he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he spoke.

' My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.  
My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and change  
With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfill'd to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,

‘I take it, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world,  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.  
I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.’

‘Parson’ said I ‘you pitch the pipe too low.  
But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Tho’ if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce hear other music : yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a dream?’  
I ask’d him half-sardonically.

‘Give?’

Give all thou art’ he answer’d, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
‘I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin : my ears could hear  
Her lightest breaths : her least remark was  
worth

The experience of the wise. I went and came :  
Her voice fled always thro’ the summer land ;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !  
The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
The crown of all, we met to part no more.’

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something jarr’d ;  
Whether he spoke too largely ; that there seem’d  
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
Or over-smoothness : howsoe’er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said :

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
 Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
 As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
 Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?  
 But you can talk : yours is a kindly vein :  
 I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much  
     within ;  
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
 That like a purple beech among the greens  
 Looks out of place : 'tis from no want in her :  
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
 Or something of a wayward modern mind  
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.  
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :  
 'God made the woman for the use of man,  
 And for the good and increase of the world.'  
 And I and Edwin laugh'd ; and now we paused  
 About the windings of the marge to hear  
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
 And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
 By ripply shallows of the lispings lake,  
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
 My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
 'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
 The close 'Your Letty, only yours ;' and this  
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ;  
 And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
 Like Prosperine in Enna, gathering flowers :

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith,  
I breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : ' Leave ' she cried  
' O leave me ! ' ' Never, dearest, never : here  
I brave the worst : ' and while we stood like fools  
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came  
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. ' What, with  
him !

Go ' (shrill'd the cottonspinning chorus) ' him !'  
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen  
' Him !'

Again with hands of wild rejection ' Go !—  
Girl, get you in ! ' She went—and in one month  
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work :  
It seems I broke a close with force and arms :  
There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :  
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;  
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet long ago  
I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of  
 prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and  
 cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet,  
 and snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.

Now I am feeble grown ; my end draws nigh ;  
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ;  
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment.  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to  
thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;

Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and  
twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and some-  
times

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
' Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages ! ' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints,  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have  
stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,

Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints ;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !  
They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)  
Have all in all endured as much and more  
Than many just and holy men, whose names  
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this ?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.  
It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what of  
that ?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?  
Yet do not rise : for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
Speak ! is there any of you halt and maim'd ?  
I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they  
shout

'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,



God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved;  
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold  
     a saint!'

And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that God hath  
     now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end;  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
 From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve;  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my  
     chest:

They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my book:  
 With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with  
     thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow  
     steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs,  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ;  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a  
shade,  
A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother,  
come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it.  
Christ !

'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frank-  
incense.

Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust  
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft.  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,

I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

### THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
Once more before my face  
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appealed  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarised a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven  
None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

' O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

' Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

' Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turn'd the cowls adrift :

' And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

' And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

‘The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

‘And I have shadow’d many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

‘And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap’d and laugh’d  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill’d his tinsel shaft.

‘I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

‘For those and theirs, by Nature’s law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

‘From when she gamboll’d on the greens,  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

‘I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, tho’ I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

‘Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

‘For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.’

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

‘O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

‘And with him Albert came on his.  
I look’d at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

‘An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel’d chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

‘But, as for her, she stay’d at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look’d with discontent.

‘She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my 'giant bole ;'

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

‘O yes, she wander’d round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss’d the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur’d thine.

‘A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

‘Then flush’d her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain;  
But not a creature was in sight:  
She kiss’d me once again.

‘Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr’d:

‘And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern’d,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn’d.

‘Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet’s waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden’s tender palm.

‘I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust:



'For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more : the day was warm :  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm,  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

‘ Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter’d round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

‘ A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

‘ Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow’d all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

‘ But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck’d it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

‘ And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

‘ I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

‘ O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.’

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro’ the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice.  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetise  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke ;  
And more than England honours that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn.

## LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout  
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
System and empire? Sin itself be found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,

Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years.  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.  
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears, would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd  
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,  
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—

No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :

Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,

To have spoken once? It could not but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,

And all good things from evil, brought the night

In which we sat together and alone,

And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,

Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,

That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears

As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times

In that last kiss, which never was the last,

Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words

That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;

Till now the dark was worn, and overhead

The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd

In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused

Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung

Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels of Time

Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,

There—closing like an individual life—

In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,

Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,

And bade adieu for ever !

Live—yet live—

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all

Life needs for life is possible to will—

Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by

My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou

For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold

If not to be forgotten—not at once—

Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,

O might it come like one that looks content,  
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
 And point thee forward to a distant light,  
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
 And leave thee frëer, till thou wake refresh'd,  
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown  
 Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl  
 Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

### THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard  
 wrote :

It was last summer on a tour in Wales :  
 Old James was with me : we that day had been  
 Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,  
 And found him in Llanberis : then we crost  
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up  
 The counter side ; and that same song of his  
 He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, 'Give,  
 Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd !

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said :  
 'But I was born too late : the fair new forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things  
 move ;  
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse ;  
 And human things returning on themselves

Move onward, leading up the golden year.

‘Ah, tho’ the times, when some new thought can  
bud,

Are but as poets’ seasons when they flower,  
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,  
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

‘When wealth no more shall rest in mounded  
heaps,

But smit with frëer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker man  
Thro’ all the season of the golden year.

‘Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

‘Fly happy happy sails and bear the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

‘But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men’s  
good

Be each man’s rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Thro’ all the circle of the golden year?’

Thus far he flow’d, and ended; whereupon

‘Ah, folly!’ in mimic cadence answer’d James—  
‘Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children’s time,  
’Tis like the second world to us that live:  
’Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year.’

With that he struck his staff against the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but  
full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,



And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis :  
 Then added, all in heat :

‘What stuff is this !

Old writers push'd the happy season back,—  
 The more fools they,—we forward : dreamers both :  
 You most, that in an age, when every hour  
 Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
 Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt  
 Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip  
 His hand into the bag : but well I know  
 That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
 This same grand year is ever at the doors.’

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast  
 The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
 And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

### ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
 I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met ;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains : but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought  
 with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;  
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;  
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :  
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the  
 deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite

The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we  
are ;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

### LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leaves me here a little, while as yet 'tis  
early morn :  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon  
the bugle horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews  
call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley  
Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the  
sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went  
to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the  
mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver  
braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth  
sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of  
Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land  
reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that  
it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could  
see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that  
would be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's  
breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself  
another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd  
dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to  
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be  
for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance  
hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the  
truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to  
thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and  
a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern  
night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden  
storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel  
eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should  
do me wrong ;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping,  
'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his  
glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden  
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the  
chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in  
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the  
copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fullness  
of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the  
stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of  
the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no  
more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren  
shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs  
have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish  
tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy? having known me—to  
decline

On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart  
than mine!

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by  
day,

What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise  
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with  
a clown,

And the grossness of his nature will have weight to  
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent  
its novel force.

Something better than his dog, a little dearer than  
his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy : think not they are  
glazed with wine.

Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand  
in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-  
wrought :

Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with  
thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-  
stand—

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee  
with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's  
disgrace,

Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last  
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength  
of youth !

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living  
truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest  
Nature's rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead  
of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou  
less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever  
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears  
but bitter fruit ?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at  
the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of  
years should come

As the many winter'd crow that leads the clanging  
rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the  
mind ?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew  
her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak  
and move :

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to  
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love  
she bore ?

No—she never loved me truly : love is love for  
evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the  
poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering  
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart  
be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on  
the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring  
at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows  
rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his  
drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that  
thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the  
phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of  
thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness  
on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy  
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender  
voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy  
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings  
thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the  
mother's breast.



O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness  
not his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of  
the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty  
part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a  
daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she her-  
self was not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-  
contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should  
I care ?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by  
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon  
days like these ?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to  
golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets  
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I  
should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's  
ground,

When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds  
are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that  
Honour feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each  
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier  
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous  
Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before  
the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of  
my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming  
years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his  
father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and  
nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a  
dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before  
him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the  
throngs of men?

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping  
something new :  
That which they have done but earnest of the things  
that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could  
see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that  
would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic  
sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with  
costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd  
a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central  
blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind  
rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the  
thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-  
flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful  
realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal  
law.

So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweeping thro' me  
left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the  
jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are  
out of joint,  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from  
point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping  
nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-  
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose  
runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process  
of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his  
youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a  
boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger  
on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more  
and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears  
a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness  
of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the  
bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for  
their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd  
string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so  
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's  
pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a  
shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,  
match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto  
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah,  
for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began  
to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-  
starr'd ;  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's  
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far  
away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the  
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and  
happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots  
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European  
flag.  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the  
trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-  
fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres  
of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in  
this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that  
shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope  
and breathing-space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my  
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they  
shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances  
in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows  
of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable  
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my  
words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the  
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our  
glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with  
lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or  
clime ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of  
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one  
by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's  
moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward  
let us range.  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing  
grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the  
younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when  
life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,  
weigh the Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath  
not set.

Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my  
fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley  
Hall!

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the  
roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over  
heath and holt,

Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a  
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire  
or snow;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

### GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamouring, ' If we pay, we starve !'  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they starve.  
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these*?'—'But I would die,' said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;  
'O ay, ay, ay, you talk !'—'Alas !' she said,  
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,  
And I repeat it ;' and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bad him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout



Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
 Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
 Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls  
 Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
 Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :  
 And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
 The fatal byword of all years to come,  
 Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
 Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,  
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
 And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  
 And she, that knew not, pass'd ; and all at once,  
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless  
     noon  
 Was clash'd and hammered from a hundred towers,  
 One after one : but even then she gain'd  
 Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
 To meet her lord, she took the tax away,  
 And built herself an everlasting name.

### THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
 'Thou art so full of misery,  
 Were it not better not to be ?'

Then to the still small voice I said ;  
 'Let me not cast in endless shade  
 What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply ;  
 'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
 Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk : from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings : like gauze they grew :  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied ;  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride :  
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall :  
'No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;  
'Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep :  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance :  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet.' But he : 'What drug can make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,  
"He dared not tarry," men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

‘Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

‘Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

‘As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

‘To search thro’ all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

‘At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

‘To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

‘In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour’d, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil’d with noble dust, he hears  
His country’s war-song thrill his ears :

‘Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman’s line is broke,  
And all the war is roll’d in smoke.’

‘Yea !’ said the voice, ‘thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.



'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorned, and bruised with  
stones :

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

'For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

'Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

‘His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho’ one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

‘His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss’d, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race—

‘His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

‘He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

‘High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him.’

‘If all be dark, vague voice,’ I said,  
‘These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

‘The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

‘I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

‘From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch’d by his feet the daisy slept.

‘The simple senses crown’d his head :  
“Omega ! thou art Lord,” they said,  
“We find no motion in the dead.”

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

‘But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

‘The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.’

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

‘Where wert thou when thy father play’d  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

‘A merry boy they called him then.  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again,

‘Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man

‘Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

‘A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth !’

‘These words,’ I said, ‘are like the rest,  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

‘But if I grant, thou might’st defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he,  
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast miss'd thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

''Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant ;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measur'd footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried.  
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers :  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;



And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice' rejoice !

## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O, LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has past away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.  
And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And order'd words asunder fly.

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

#### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains ;  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.

Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair :  
The page has caught her hand in his :  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
His own are pouted to a kiss :  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, misletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood ,  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purpled coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever ; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III

She sleeps . her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL

## I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth ;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 ' They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 ' The many fail : the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
 The colour flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ;  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps wind ;  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
 ' Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;

A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
'By holy rood, a royal beard !'  
How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap.'  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
My joints are something stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd half an hour ago ?'  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words return'd reply :  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE

## I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old :  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss ;'  
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

## III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'  
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV

'A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where ?'  
'O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.'

And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL

## I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

You shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends ;



To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again ,  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquenniads would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake :  
 For, am I right or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;

Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes?  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fullness of the pensive mind;  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fair?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light:  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree  
And waster than a warren :  
Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion !  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation ;  
Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down  
Coquetting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers gallopaded.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plumb'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexile then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs  
And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;

Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading:  
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro' there  
And Methods of transplanting trees,  
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom:  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

## ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground ;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round ;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee :  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be.  
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
The flashes come and go ;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,  
And deepens on and up ! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride

## SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel :  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ,  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.



The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the corses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
'O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
'And have you lost your heart?' she said ;  
'And are you married yet, Edward Gray ?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—  
 Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair :  
 I repent me of all I did  
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair !"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
 "Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
 And here the heart of Edward Gray !"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :  
 But I will love no more, no more,  
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
 And there the heart of Edward Gray !'

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time ? 'Tis five o'clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port :  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind,  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,

To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favour'd lips of mine ;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble ;  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days :  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them—  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah, yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
 There must be stormy weather ;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
 If old things, there are new ;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
 With fair horizons bound :  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out, a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar,  
 And, set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But thro' a kind of glory.

---

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
 Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,  
 The pint, you brought me, was the best  
 That ever came from pipe.  
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
 Is there some magic in the place ?  
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,

Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay,  
Where long and largely we carouse  
As who shall say me nay :  
Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
We drink defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
Had relish fiery-new,  
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
As old as Waterloo ;  
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)  
In musty bins and chambers,  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is  
She answer'd to my call,  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all :  
She lit the spark within my throat,  
To make my blood run quicker,  
Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramm'd a plumper crop ;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw  
 A something-pottle-bodied boy,  
 That knuckled at the taw :  
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,  
 Flew over roof and casement :  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And follow'd with acclaims,  
 A sign to many a staring shire,  
 Came crowing over Thames.  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fix'd for ever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

---

But whither would my fancy go?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks !  
 'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than common ;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
 Into the common day ?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay ?

For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit (my empty glass reversed),  
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife  
I take myself to task ;  
Lest of the fullness of my life  
I leave an empty flask :  
For I had hope, by something rare,  
To prove myself a poet ;  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up ;  
The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup :  
And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
We know not what we know.  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,  
'Tis gone, and let it go.  
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more ;  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters ;  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
 Had yet their native glow :  
 Nor yet the fear of little books  
 Had made him talk for show ;  
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches ;  
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth !  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
 At half thy real worth ?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass :  
 With time I will not quarrel :  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

---

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part : I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
 And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots :  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots :  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 - In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

*We* fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins.  
 Would quarrel with our lot ;  
*Thy* care is, under polish'd tins.  
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;



To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies ;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes :  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more ;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven :  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot, neatly graven.

## TO —

### AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

‘Cursed be he that moves my bones.’  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown :  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry :

'Proclaim the faults he would not show  
Break lock and seal : betray the trust  
Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
No public life was his on earth  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :  
His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd !

## TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneïan pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown  
By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea.

### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
They two will wed the morrow morn ;  
God's blessing on the day !

'He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'  
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,  
'That all comes round so just and fair:  
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are not the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'  
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'  
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
'I speak the truth: you are my child.'

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;  
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
'But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the broach of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
She said 'Not so : but I will know  
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse,  
'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !  
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'  
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare :  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :  
'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are :  
I am a beggar born,' she said,  
'And not the Lady Clare.'

‘Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,  
‘For I am yours in word and in deed.  
Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,  
‘Your riddle is hard to read.’

O and proudly stood she up !  
Her heart within her did not fail :  
She look’d into Lord Ronald’s eyes,  
And told him all her nurse’s tale.

He laugh’d a laugh of merry scorn :  
He turn’d and kiss’d her where she stood :  
‘If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,’ said he, ‘the next in blood—

‘If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,’ said he, ‘the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare.’

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
‘If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watch’d thee daily,  
And I think thou lov’st me well.’  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
‘There is none I love like thee.’  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
And a village maiden she.  
He to lips, that fondly falter,  
Presses his without reproof :  
Leads her to the village altar,  
And they leave her father’s roof.  
‘I can make no marriage present ;  
Little can I give my wife.  
Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
And I love thee more than life.’

They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand :  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land.  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
Says to her that loves him well,  
' Let us see these handsome houses  
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
So she goes by him attended,  
Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;  
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
Parks and order'd gardens great,  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer :  
Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days.  
O but she will love him truly !  
He shall have a cheerful home ;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come.  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,  
And beneath the gate she turns ;  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before :  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door.  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call,  
While he treads with footstep firmer,  
Leading on from hall to hall.  
And, while now she wonders blindly,  
Nor the meaning can divine,  
Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
' All of this is mine and thine.'

Here he lives in state and bounty,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
Not a lord in all the county  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the colour flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.  
Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove :  
But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Tho' at times her spirits sank :  
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
To all duties of her rank :  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honour  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
As she murmur'd, ' Oh, that he  
Were once more that landscape-painter  
Which did win my heart from me !'  
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
Fading slowly from his side :  
Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.  
Weeping, weeping late and early,  
Walking up and pacing down,  
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
And he came to look upon her,  
And he look'd at her and said,  
' Bring the dress and put it on her,  
That she wore when she was wed.'



Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

### A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere  
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
 And, far in forest-deeps unseen,  
 The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :  
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
 In curves the yellowing river ran,  
 And drooping chestnut-buds began  
 To spread into the perfect fan,  
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
 With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring  
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
 Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :  
And fleetier now she skimm'd the plains  
Than she whose elin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver :  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river :  
No where by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver ;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver ;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can say :  
Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way ;  
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen :  
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been :  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

### THE VISION OF SIN

#### I

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
A youth came riding toward a palace gate.  
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
And from the palace came a child of sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,

Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—  
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,  
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles  
of grapes.

## II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;  
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,  
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,  
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;  
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;  
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,  
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and pal-  
pitated ;  
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :  
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,  
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,  
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,  
And link'd again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,  
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV

‘Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

‘Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed ;  
What ! the flower of life is past :  
It is long before you wed.

‘Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

‘I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

‘Wine is good for shrivell’d lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp’d in clay.

‘Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

‘Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

‘Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

‘Fill the cup, and fill the can .  
Have a rouse before the morn .  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

‘We are men of ruin’d blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

‘Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Thro’ the courts, the camps, the schools  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Bandied by the hands of fools.

‘Friendship !—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack !  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

‘Virtue!—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

‘O! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbour’s wife.

‘Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

‘Drink, and let the parties rave :  
They are fill’d with idle spleen ;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

‘He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant’s power ;  
And the tyrant’s cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

‘Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

‘Greet her with applauseive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

‘No, I love not what is new ;  
She is of an ancient house :  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

‘Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs :  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

‘Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

‘Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

‘Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me.

‘Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

‘Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

‘Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

‘Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !



' You are bones, and what of that ?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

' Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

' No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

' Lo ! God's likeness—the ground-plan—  
Neither modell'd, glazed, or framed :  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed !

' Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

' Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near .  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

' Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

' Fill the cup, and fill the can !  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn  
Dregs of life, and lees of man :  
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

## v

The voice grew faint : there came a further change  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :  
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.  
Then some one spake : ' Behold ! it was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'  
Another said : ' The crime of sense became  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'  
And one : ' He had not wholly quench'd his power ;  
A little grain of conscience made him sour.'  
At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, ' Is there any hope ?'  
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand ;  
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

---

Come not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
I care no longer, being all unblest :  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :  
Go by, go by.

## THE EAGLE

## FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with hooked hands ;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

---

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

---

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

## THE POETS SONG

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many  
songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away.'

## THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY

### PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither halr  
The neighbouring borough with their Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,—the son  
A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the  
house,  
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their  
names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at Agincourt;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon'

A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him '—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
knights  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died ;  
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,  
'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight  
to me ;  
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of  
stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes  
For azure views; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the  
lake  
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls  
A dozen angry models jetted steam:  
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:

And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
 Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
 With Science hand in hand went ; elsewhere  
 Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd  
 And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about  
 Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids  
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light  
 And shadow, while the twangling violin  
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead  
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;  
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,  
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave  
 The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within  
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
 From neighbour seats : and there was Ralph  
 himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
 Half child half woman as she was, had wound  
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
 Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast  
 Shone, silver-set : about it lay the guests,  
 And there we joined them : then the maiden  
 Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd  
 An universal culture for the crowd,  
 And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told  
 Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,  
 And he had squeez'd himself betwixt the bars,  
 And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs ; and one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad : which brought  
My book to mind : and opening this I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness, and ' Where,'  
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) ' lives there such a woman now ?

Quick answer'd Lilia ' There are thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats them down .  
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
That love to keep us children ! O I wish  
That I were some great Princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;  
We are twice as quick ! ' And here she shook  
aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling, ' Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear  
If there were many Lillas in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it.'



At this upon the sward  
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :  
 'That's your light way ; but I would make it  
 death  
 For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;  
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
 And sweet as English air could make her, she :  
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
 And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'  
 And swore he long'd at College, only long'd,  
 All else was well, for she-society.  
 They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd  
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
 They lost their weeks, they vex'd the souls of  
 deans ;  
 They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends  
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,  
 'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.  
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
 And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again !' he said.  
 'Come, listen ! here is proof that you were  
 miss'd :

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;  
 And there we took one tutor as to read :  
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square  
 Were out of season : never man, I think,  
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :  
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,

And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls—  
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Liliās—play'd  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
 And *what's my thought and when and where and*  
*how*  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas.'

She remembered that :  
 A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it  
 more

Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,  
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain  
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips :  
 And Walter nodded at me ; ' *He* began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what  
 kind ?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter.'

' Kill him now,  
 The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,'  
 Said Lilia ; ' Why not now,' the maiden Aunt.  
 ' Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn !'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
 An echo like an April woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face  
 With colour) turn'd to me with ' As you will ;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamour'd he,  
'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,  
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'  
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!  
Heroic seems our Princess as required.—  
But something made to suit with Time and place,  
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments—  
Were such a medley we should have him back  
Who told the "winter's tale" to do it for us.  
No matter: we will say whatever comes.  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:  
And here I give the story and the songs.

# I

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:  
But my good father thought a king a king;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd  
To one, a neighbouring Princess: she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old; and still from time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their  
queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should  
wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought  
back

A present, a great labour of the loom;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind.  
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;  
He said there was a compact; that was true:  
But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:  
The first, a gentleman of broken means  
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts  
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
My shadow, my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, kin as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent  
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof

From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd  
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his  
    spleen  
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. 'My father, let me go.  
It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said :  
'I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land :  
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'  
Then whisper'd Cyril : 'Take me with you too.  
Trust me, I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
I grate on rusty hinges here : ' but 'No !'  
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not ; we  
    ourselves  
Will crush these pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets : break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and past  
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;  
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :  
What were those fancies ? wherefore break her  
    troth ?  
Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated  
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the  
    shrieks

Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
Went with it ' Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived.  
Down from the bastion'd wall, suspense by night,  
Like threaded spiders from a balk, we dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost  
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his  
voice,  
But bland the smile that pucker'd up his cheeks ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,  
And my betroth'd. ' You do us, Prince,' he  
said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
' All honour. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass  
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—  
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,  
With my full heart : but there were widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets  
rang ;  
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;  
Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,  
Was all in all ; they had but been, she thought,  
As children ; they must lose the child, assume

The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,  
About this losing of the child,—and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics prophesying change,  
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
And they that know such things—I sought but  
peace ;

No critic I—would call them masterpieces :  
They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon,  
A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it ; and there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more  
We know not,—only this : they see no men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her  
As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since  
(And I confess with right) you think me bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king ;  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet not less all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride,  
Set out once more with those two gallant boys :  
Many a long league back to the North we past,  
And came (the fern-owl whirring in the copse)  
Upon a little town within a wood  
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;  
There enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He, with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'd  
Averring it was clear against all rules

For any man to go : but as his brain  
Began to mellow, ' If the king,' he said,  
' Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?  
The king would bear him out ; ' and at the last—  
The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
' No doubt that we might make it worth his  
while.

She once had past that way ; he heard her speak ;  
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave ;  
And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;  
He always made a point to post with mares ;  
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys.  
The land he understood for miles about  
Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,  
And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,  
Remembering how we three presented Maid  
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;  
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We rode till midnight when the college lights  
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley ; then we past an arch,  
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars ;  
And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow. Further on we gain'd  
A little street half garden and half house ;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down



In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :  
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and  
Earth

With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;  
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench  
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.  
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,  
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave  
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,  
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche' she said,  
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was prettiest,  
Best natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers are we,'  
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East ;

'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And over him Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes -  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

---

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
And kiss'd again with tears :

And blessings on the falling-out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love,  
And kiss again with tears !  
For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears

---

## II

At break of day the College Portress came :  
She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were  
on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,  
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.  
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,  
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst ;  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
Than our man's earth : such eyes were in her  
head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing down  
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn

Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,  
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

'We give you welcome : not without redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?'  
'We of the court' said Cyril. 'From the court'  
She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince ?'  
and he :

'The climax of his age ! as tho' there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
He worships your ideal : ' she replied :  
'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would  
seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;  
Your language proves you still the child. For us,  
We dream not of him : when we set our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,  
Perused the matting ; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these :  
Not for three years to correspond with home ;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any men ;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards : and 'Now' she cried

'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!

Our statues!—not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. Leave us: you may go:  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal: back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning doves  
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
A patient range of pupils; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,  
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge,  
'My sister.' 'Comely too by all that's fair'  
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast

The planets : then the monster, then the man ;  
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate ;  
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took  
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past ;  
Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
As emblematic of a nobler age ;  
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
How far from just ; till warming with her theme  
She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet  
With much contempt, and came to chivalry :  
When some respect, however slight, was paid  
To woman, superstition all awry :  
However then commenced the dawn : a beam  
Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
None lordlier than themselves but that which  
made  
Woman and man. She had founded ; they must  
build ;  
Here might they learn whatever men were taught :  
Let them not fear : some said their heads were  
less :  
Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;  
For often fineness compensated size :  
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew  
With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;  
He took advantage of his strength to be  
First in the field : some ages had been lost ;  
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
Was longer ; and albeit their glorious names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman: and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man:  
 And, last not least, she who had left her place,  
 And bow'd her state to them, that they might  
     grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future; 'everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind:  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those rare souls.  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the  
     world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest  
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried  
 'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O' she  
     said

'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?  
 Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me'

A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all !'  
 'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched  
     boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ?'  
 'And if I had' he answer'd 'who could think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men ?'  
 'But you will find it otherwise' she said.  
 'You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools ! my vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones ;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind.'*  
 'Let me die too' said Cyril 'having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in :

'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth ;  
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I came.'  
 'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ; none ;  
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt  
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.'  
 'Yet pause,' I said : 'for that inscription there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit : if more there be,  
 If more and acted on, what follows ? war ;  
 Your own work marr'd : for this your Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the haloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess judge  
Of that' she said: 'farewell Sir—and to you.  
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche' I rejoind,  
'The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
And all else fled: we point to it, and we say,  
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred veins?'  
'Are you that Psyche' Florian added 'she  
With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you  
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you  
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?'  
'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for whom  
I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more

'Are you that Lady Psyche' I began,  
'That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the king  
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;  
That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them: look! for such are these and I?'  
'Are you that Psyche' Florian ask'd 'to whom,





To see you, Florian. I give thee to death  
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well ?'

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up  
From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,  
And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,  
'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'  
Back started she, and turning round we saw  
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,  
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown  
That clad her like an April daffodilly  
(Her mother's colour) with her lips apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.  
Then Lady Psyche 'Ah—Melissa—you !  
You heard us ?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me !  
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,  
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'  
'I trust you' said the other 'for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine :  
But yet your mother's jealous temperament—  
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove  
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honour, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not'  
Replied Melissa 'no—I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.  
 'Be it so' the other 'that we still may lead  
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'  
 Said Cyril 'Madam, he the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you  
 (Tho' madam *you* should answer, *we* would ask)  
 Less welcome find among us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more.' He said not what,  
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'go: we have been  
 too long

Together: keep your hoods about the face;  
 They do so that affect abstraction here.  
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold  
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,  
 And held her round the knees against his waist,  
 And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the  
 child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;  
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day thro' stately theatres  
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
 The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
 The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration: follow'd then  
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long  
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame, the rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and known;  
Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,  
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :  
'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.'  
'They hunt old trails' said Cyril 'very well ;  
But when did woman ever yet invent ?'  
'Ungracious !' answer'd Florian, 'have you learnt  
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ?'  
'O trash' he said 'but with a kernel in it.  
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?  
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,  
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang ; but O  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too ;  
He cleft me thro' the stomacher ; and now  
What think you of it, Florian? will it hold?  
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?  
For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double worth,  
And much I might have said, but that my zone  
Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O to hear  
The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants  
Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou,  
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;  
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out of time  
 Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell  
 For dinner, let us go !'

And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair,  
 In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in awful dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors : they, the while,  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :  
 A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms  
 Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone  
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
 With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there  
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
 In this hand held a volume as to read,  
 And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :  
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
 Or under arches of the marble bridge  
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some hid and  
 sought

In the orange thickets : others tost a ball  
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
 With laughter : others lay about the lawns,  
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May  
 Was passing : what was learning unto them ?  
 They wish'd to marry ; they could rule a house ;  
 Men hated learned women : but we three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts

Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not : then day droopt ; the chapel  
    bells  
Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those  
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,  
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court  
A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven  
A blessing on her labours for the world.

---

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
    Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
    Wind of the western sea !  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dropping moon, and blow,  
    Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
    Father will come to thee soon ;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon ;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
    Under the silver moon :  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

---

### III

MORN in the white wake of the morning star  
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with care  
Descended to the court that lay three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd  
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and  
 watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
 'And fly' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may !  
 My mother knows : ' and when I ask'd her ' how ,  
 ' My fault ' she wept ' my fault ! and yet not mine ;  
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.  
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;  
 And so it was agreed when first they came ;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;  
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :  
 Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her.  
 " Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
 " Girls ?—more like men ! " and at these words  
 the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :  
 " O marvellously modest maiden, you !  
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus  
 For wholesale comment. " Pardon, I am shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful : " men " (for still  
 My mother went revolving on the word)  
 " And so they are,—very like men indeed—  
 And with that woman closeted for hours ! "  
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
 " Why—these—*are*—men : " I shudder'd : " and  
 you know it. "  
 " O ask me nothing, " I said : " And she knows too,

And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd  
The truth at once, but with no word from me ;  
And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush'd ;  
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :  
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ?'  
Said Cyril : 'Pale one, blush again : than wear  
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven'  
He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak  
In scorn of us, "they mounted, Ganymedes,  
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."  
But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us farther furlough : ' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,  
'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'  
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two  
Division smoulders hidden : 'tis my mother,  
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;  
And still she rail'd against the state of things.  
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.  
But when your sister came she won the heart  
Of Ida : they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated ;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note ;  
One mind in all things : yet my mother still  
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's love :  
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :  
But I must go : I dare not tarry' and light  
As flies the shadow of a bird she fled.



Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her.  
'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
If I could love, why this were she : how pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random wish :  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess ! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way : being herself  
Three times more noble than three-score of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me : for her, and her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar ; but—ah she—whene'er she moves  
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun.

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,  
And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale  
That blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he cried,  
'Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found her there  
At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming storm.  
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,  
As man could be ; yet maiden-meek I pray'd  
Concealment : she demanded who we were,  
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,

But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
And our three lives. True—we had limed our-  
selves  
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm  
The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she  
said,  
"So puddled as it is with favouritism."  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :  
Her answer was "Leave me to deal with that."  
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand years,  
I recommenced ; "Decide not ere you pause.  
I find you here but in the second place  
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.  
I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain  
His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign  
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,  
And your great name flow on with broadening  
time  
For ever." Well, she balanced this a little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I  
gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.  
'That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.  
Would we go with her? we should find the land

Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall  
 Out yonder : ' then she pointed on to where  
 A double hill ran up his dark-blue forks  
 Beyond the full-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all  
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
 Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood  
 Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
 Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd  
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near :  
 My heart beat thick with passion and with awe,  
 And from my breast the involuntary sigh  
 Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes  
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook  
 My pulses, till to horse we clomb, and so  
 Went forth in long retinue following up  
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :  
 ' O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not  
 Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;  
 Unwillingly we spake.' ' No—not to her,'  
 I answer'd, ' but to one of whom we spake  
 Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you  
     say.'  
 ' Again?' she cried ' are you ambassadors  
 From him to me? we give you, being strange,  
 A license : speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have  
     wish'd—  
 ' Our king expects—was there no pre-contract—  
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
 All he prefigured, and he could not see  
 The bird of passage flying south but long'd  
 To follow : surely, if your Highness keep  
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,  
 Or baser courses, children of despair.'

‘Poor boy’ she said ‘can he not read—no books?  
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercises?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourselves have been:  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,  
To lift the woman’s fall’n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.’

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile  
‘And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
At no man’s beck, but know ourselves and thee,  
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon’d out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.’

‘Alas your Highness breathes full East,’ I said,  
‘On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,  
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work  
To assail this gray præminence of man!  
You grant me license; might I use it? think,  
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;  
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains  
May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,  
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,  
Love, children, happiness?’

And she exclaim’d,  
‘Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!  
What! tho’ your Prince’s love were like a God’s  
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
You are bold indeed: we are not talk’d to thus:

Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :  
But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,  
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die :  
They with the sun and moon renew their light  
For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
Children—that men may pluck them from our  
    hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
O—children—there is nothing upon earth  
More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;  
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
Who learns the one row stro whence after-hands  
May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
Of frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
That we might see our own work out, and watch  
The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
If that strange maiden could at all be won.  
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you :  
We are used to that ; for women, up till this  
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
Oh if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sister's liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,  
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out  
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd  
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,  
'As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I ask'd,  
'Which wrought us, as the workman and his  
work,  
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you  
love  
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:  
For there are schools for all.' 'And yet' I said  
'Methinks I have not found among them all  
One anatomic.' 'Nay we thought of that,'  
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the living  
hound,  
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:  
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
Which touches on the workman and his work.  
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:  
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
And all creation is one act at once,

The birth of light : but we that are not all,  
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and  
make

One act a phantom of succession : thus  
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow,  
Time ;

But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake

With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,  
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I said  
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
'To linger here with one that loved us.' 'Yea'  
She answer'd 'or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy ; for indeed these fields  
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw  
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers  
Built to the Sun : ' then, turning to her maids,  
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;  
Lay out the viands.' At the word, they raised  
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here she stood,  
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
The woman-conqueror ; woman-conquer'd there  
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,  
And all the men mourn'd at his side : but we  
Set forth to climb ; then, climbing, Cyril kept  
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag : and then we turn'd, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun

Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

---

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story :  
The long light shakes across the lakes  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river :  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

---

#### IV

‘THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,  
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound’  
Said Ida; ‘let us down and rest:’ and we  
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,  
Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where below  
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean’d on me,  
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,  
And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
Beneath the satin dome and enter’d in,



There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank  
Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst  
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she 'Let some one sing to us : lightlier  
move  
The minutes fledged with music : ' and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

' Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

' Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

' Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that the tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess ' If indeed there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past

So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
While down the streams that float us each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time  
Toward that great year of equal might and  
rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
Found golden: let the past be past; let be  
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break  
The starr'd mosaic, and the wild goat hang  
Upon the shaft, and the wild figtree split  
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
Above the unrisen morrow: 'then to me;  
'Know you no song of your own land,' she said,  
'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
But deals with the other distance and the hues  
Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had made  
What time I watch'd the swallow winging south  
From mine own land, part made long since, and  
part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

' O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and  
light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

' O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

' Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with  
love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

' O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

' O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

' O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien  
lips,  
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice  
Rang false : but smiling ' Not for thee,' she said,  
' O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this  
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are  
men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her ! she is dead.  
So they blaspheme the muse ! but great is song  
Used to great ends : ourself have often tried  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd  
The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
Love is it ? Would this same mock-love, and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
Whole in ourselves and due to none. Enough !  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
That gives the manners of your countrywomen ?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with  
eyes  
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,  
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd flask had  
wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and  
shook ;  
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows ;  
'Forbear' the Princess cried ; 'Forbear, Sir' I ;

And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,  
I smote him on the breast; he started up;  
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the death;' 'To horse'  
Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled, as flies  
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,  
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vexed at heart,  
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,  
And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,  
'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the  
Head!'

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd  
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:  
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch  
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,  
No more; but woman-vested as I was  
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her;  
then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave  
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd  
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms; they cried 'she  
lives!'

They bore her back into the tent: but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot  
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft

Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to  
hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,  
I paced the terrace, till the bear had wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she'  
But it was Florian. 'Hist O hist,' he said,  
'They seek us : out so late is out of rules.  
Moreover "seize the strangers" is the cry.  
How came you here?' I told him ; 'I' said he  
'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.  
Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all  
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent

For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd  
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;  
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ;  
 And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?  
 And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled.  
 What, if together ? that were not so well.  
 Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I  
 That struck him : this is proper to the clown,  
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the  
     clown,  
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
 That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er  
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips  
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
 These flashes on the surface are not he.  
 He has a solid base of temperament :  
 But as the waterlily starts and slides  
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near  
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, 'Names :'  
 He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I began  
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
 And double in and out the boles, and race  
 By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :  
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ; behind  
 I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine ear  
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
 At last I hook'd my ancle in a vine,  
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
 And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat  
 High in the hall : above her droop'd a lamp,

And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black  
hair  
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind,  
and rain  
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and clang'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
An advent to the throne ; and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :  
I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother : those were gracious times.  
Then came your new friend : you began to  
change—  
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool ;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something great



In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve; and thus a noble  
    scheme  
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;  
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:  
We took this palace; but even from the first  
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.  
What student came but that you planed her path  
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;  
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:  
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they*  
    endured,  
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:  
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,  
A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot  
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd  
To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear  
    of it  
From Lady Psyche: 'you had gone to her,  
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us  
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem  
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat  
Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be known;  
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,  
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;  
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)  
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,  
That surely she will speak; if not, then I:

Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they  
were

According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)  
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;  
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health wealth and time  
And talents, I—you know it—I will not boast:  
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff,  
For every gust of chance, and men will say  
We did not know the real light, but chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly 'Good:  
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)  
Our mind is changed: we take it to ourselves.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.  
'The plan was mine. I built the nest' she said  
'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to  
updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast  
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while  
We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and  
wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head

Took half-amazed and in her lion's mood  
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
 When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;  
 For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,  
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
 In the dead hush the papers that she held  
 Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet  
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;  
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd  
 The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say  
 'Read' and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your  
     way  
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
 You lying close upon his territory,  
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus:  
 'You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:  
 Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:  
 Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear  
 You hold the woman is the better man;  
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against their Lords  
 Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your palace  
     down;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us back

Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read ;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve  
But led by golden wishes and a hope  
The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,  
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
Less mine than yours : my nurse would tell me  
of you ;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd to me  
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south  
And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn  
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm  
light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been  
Sphered up with Cassiopœia, or the enthroned  
Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
That many a famous man and woman, town  
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
The dwarfs of presage ; tho' when known, there  
grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found  
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music ; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life ; O more than poor men wealth,  
 Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—  
                   but half

Without you, with you, whole ; and of those  
                   halves

You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :  
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together ; from the illumin'd hall  
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike  
                   eyes,

And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro  
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,  
                   some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the land,  
 And some that men were in the very walls,  
 And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built

And worse-confounded : high above them stood  
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace, she look'd, the Head : but rising  
up  
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
To the open window moved, remaining there  
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light  
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms  
and call'd  
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye brawlers? am not I your Head?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : *I* dare  
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear?  
Peace! there are those to avenge us and they  
come :

If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die : yet I blame ye not so much for fear ;  
Six thousand years of fear have made ye that  
From which I would redeem ye : but for those  
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know  
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn  
We hold a great convention : then shall they  
That love their voices more than duty, learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,  
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and in their  
heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the  
 crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that  
 look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom  
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said.

' You have done well and like a gentleman,  
 And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :  
 And you look well too in your woman's dress :  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—  
 Then men had said—but now—What hinders  
 me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—  
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,  
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour !  
 You that have dared to break our bound, and  
 gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—  
 I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract  
 Your bride, your bondslave ! not tho' all the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your  
 crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and your face are loathsome to  
 us :  
 I trample on your offers and on you :  
 Begone : we will not look upon you more.  
 Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.  
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd  
 Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
 The weight of destiny : so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the  
court,  
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty  
mound  
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
The voices murmuring; till upon my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy,  
Which I shook off, for I was ever one  
To whom the shadow of all mischance but came  
As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun,  
Set into sunrise : then we moved away.

---

When all among the thundering drums  
Thy soldier in the battle stands,  
Thy face across his fancy comes  
And gives the battle to his hands :  
A moment while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee—  
The next—like fire he meets the foe,  
Strikes him dead for them and thee!  
Tara ta tantara !

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd  
She struck such warbling fury through the  
words ;  
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd  
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—  
Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :  
And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
' Sir Ralph has got your colours : if I prove  
Your knight and fight your battle, what for me ?'  
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it. ' Fight ' she said,



'And make us all we would be, great and good.'  
 He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
 Arranged the favour and assumed the Prince.

## V

Now scarce three paces measured from the mound  
 We stumbled on a stationary voice  
 And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the palace' I.  
 'The second two: they wait,' he said, 'pass on;  
 His Highness wakes:' and one, that clash'd in  
                   arms,

By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas, led  
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
 Whispers of war.

                  Entering, the sudden light  
 Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,  
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes  
 A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbour's ear; and then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
 On all sides, clamouring etiquette to death  
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
 The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering  
                   teeth,  
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and  
                   blew,  
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

                  At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with  
                   tears,  
 Panted from weary sides 'King, you are free!  
 We did but keep you surety for our son,  
 If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunTERS in the sludge.'

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with  
briers,

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel :  
'But hence' he said 'indue yourselves like men.  
Your Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
From what was left of faded woman-slough  
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,  
And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us  
A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given  
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon  
Followed his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping : 'then we fell  
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off : we entered in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,  
Pitiful sight, wrapt in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to  
foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,  
All her fair length upon the ground she lay :  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he whisper'd  
to her  
'Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not thus.  
What have you done but right ? you could not  
slay  
Me, nor your prince : look up : be comforted :

Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
When fall'n in darker ways.' And likewise I:  
'Be comforted: have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless charm  
That none has else for me.' She heard, she  
    moved,  
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,  
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and  
    smooth,  
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death  
In deathless marble. 'Her' she said 'my  
    friend—  
Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—  
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your  
    faith?  
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!'  
To whom remorseful Cyril 'Yet I pray  
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!'  
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!  
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl  
Remembering her mother: O my flower!  
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,  
And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than were she  
    dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,  
The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
And make a wild petition night and day,  
Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
And lay my little blossom at my feet,

My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child :  
And I will take her up and go my way,  
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :  
Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me,  
Who gave me back my child ?' 'Bè comforted'  
Said Cyril 'you shall have it:' but again  
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
Like tender things that being caught feign death,  
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran  
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts  
With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
We left her by the woman, and without  
Found the gray kings at parle : and 'Look you'

cried  
My father 'that our compact be fulfilled :  
You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you  
and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him,  
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;  
She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me :  
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
With our strange girl : and yet they say that still  
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :  
How say you, war or not ?'

'Not war, if possible,  
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,  
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
The smouldering homestead, and the household  
flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—  
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn  
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate  
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
And every face she look'd on justify it)  
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,  
By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd

Your cities into shards with catapults,  
 She would not love ;—or brought her chained, a  
     slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my little chance  
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this  
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,  
 Not to be molten out.'

    And roughly spake  
 My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the girls :  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game ;  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them down :  
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for  
     shame !

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and  
     leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with  
     death

He reddens what he kisses ; thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand—gentleness  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it.'

    'Yea but Sire,' I cried,  
 'Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier ? No :  
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize  
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she rose

The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,  
True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
That have as many differences as we.

The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one  
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need  
More breadth of culture : is not Ida right ?  
They worth it ? truer to the law within ?  
Severer in the logic of a life ?  
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of Earth and Heaven ? and she of whom you  
speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,  
But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,  
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
As dues of Nature. To our point : not war :  
Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense'  
Said Gama. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then  
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida : she can talk ;  
And there is something in it as you say :  
But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.—  
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
I would he had our daughter : for the rest

Our own detention, why the causes weigh'd,  
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the plowman's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-  
                   maid,

Nor robbed the farmer of his bowl of cream :  
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida : something may be done—  
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,  
 Follow us : who knows ? we four may build some  
                   plan

Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the  
                   lawns

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring  
 In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke  
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and  
                   oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode ;  
 And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dew  
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air  
 On our mail'd heads : but other thoughts than  
                   Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,  
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the  
                   flowers

With clamour : for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;  
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their arms ; the  
drum

Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife ;  
And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner : anon to meet us lightly pranced  
Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men : the midmost and the highest  
Was Arac : all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them  
glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike : then took the king  
His three broad sons ; with now a wandering  
hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all :  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

' Our land invaded, life and soul ! himself  
Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
And, life ! myself I care not, war or no :  
But then this question of your troth remains ;  
And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;  
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet  
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;



She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
 What know I of these things? but, life and soul!  
 I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;  
 Yet, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,  
 I stand upon her side: she made me swear it—  
 Life—and with solemn rites by candle-light—  
 Swear by St. something—I forget her name—  
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;  
*She* was a princess too; and so I swore.  
 Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:  
 If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
 Decides it, life! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up  
 My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;  
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
 To prick us on to combat 'Like to like!  
 The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'  
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!  
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point  
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
 'Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.'

Then spake the third 'But three to three? no  
 more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
 More, more, for honour: every captain waits  
 Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
 May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow  
 Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea' answered I 'for this wild wreath of air,  
 This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
 Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if ye will.  
 It needs must be for honour if at all:  
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,

And if we win, we fail : she would not keep  
Her compact.' 'Life ! but we will send to her,'  
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue : let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the word.'

'Boys !' shriek'd the old king, but vainlier  
than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool ; for none  
Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to say :  
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three times he went :  
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd :  
He battered at the doors ; none came : the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence :  
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,  
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild : not less one glance he  
caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise  
Of arms ; and standing like a stately Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry ;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :

And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris  
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance went and came ;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling words  
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

'O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,  
What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;  
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of  
those,—

Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and  
swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'd all :  
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
No woman named : therefore I set my face  
Against all men and lived but for mine own.  
Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
I stored it full of rich memorial :  
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys

Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,  
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not  
what

Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their  
sport!—

I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?  
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd  
In honour—what, I would not aught of false—  
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know  
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide  
What end soever: but you will not. Still  
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;  
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,  
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home.

O dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you  
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,  
Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues  
Rear'd, sung to, when this gad-fly brush'd aside,  
We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
And mould a generation strong to move  
With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
(The woman-phantom, she that seem'd no more  
Than the man's shadow in a glass, her name  
Yoked in his mouth with children's) know herself,  
And knowledge in our own land make her free,  
And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain  
Of Freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.  
'See that there be no traitors in your camp:  
We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men  
Almost our maids were better at their homes,

Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think  
Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
She shall not have it back : the child shall grow  
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
This morning : there the tender orphan hands  
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from  
thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell.'

I ceased ; he said : ' Stubborn, but she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunderstorms  
And breed up warriors ! See now, tho' yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight, the woman takes  
it up,  
And topples down the scales ; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all.  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth :  
Man for the sword and for the needle she :  
Man with the head and woman with the heart :  
Man to command and woman to obey ;  
All else confusion. Look you ! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell  
Mix with his hearth : but you—she's yet a colt—  
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly  
curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :  
I like her none the less for rating at her  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,

The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king :  
I took my leave : it was the point of noon :  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier—yet a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears  
And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept their  
seats :  
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew :  
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses.  
Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and  
shield—  
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most—and thinking thus  
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,  
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she  
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,  
Yea, let her see me die. With that I drave

Among the thickest, and bore down a Prince,  
 And Cyril, one ; but that large-moulded man,  
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman,  
           came

As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 And shadowing down the champain till it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks,  
           and splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry, for everything  
 Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
 Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
 And threw him : last I spurred ; I felt my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced ;  
 I did but shear a feather, and life and love  
 Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead :  
       She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
       'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
       Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
       Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
       Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
       Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
‘Sweet my child, I live for thee.’

---

## VI

WHAT follow'd, tho' I saw not, yet I heard  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For when our side was vanquished and my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they  
came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they  
heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n them-  
selves.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they  
came,



The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

‘ Our enemies have fall’n, have fall’n : they  
    struck ;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor  
    knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter’d to the shoulder blade.

‘ Our enemies have fall’n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and roll’d  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.’

‘ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Champion’d our cause and won it with a day  
Blanch’d in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse man-  
    kind,  
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
Lie bruised and maim’d, the tender ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.’

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and  
    led

A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they  
came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche  
At distance follow'd : so they came : anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there  
stay'd ;  
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and  
prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said ' You shall not lie in the tents but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and  
served  
With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,  
She past my way. Up started from my side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,  
Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :  
' He saved my life : my brother slew him for it'  
No more : at which the king in bitter scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,

And held them up : she saw them, and a day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore the  
     tress

With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :  
 And then once more she look'd at my pale face :  
 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;  
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she  
     laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives : he is not dead :  
 O let me have him with my brethren here  
 In our own palace : we will tend on him  
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said : but at the happy word 'he lives'  
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
 So those two foes above my fallen life,  
 With brow to brow like night and evening mixt  
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
 Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamouring out 'Mine—mine—  
     not yours,

It is not yours, but mine : give me the child'  
 Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
 So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,  
 And turn'd each face her way : wan was her  
     cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,

Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew  
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it seem'd,  
Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his face,  
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him  
grew  
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

‘O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !  
But Love and Nature, these are two more  
terrible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
What would you more ? give her the child !  
remain

Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware  
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
The common hate with the revolving wheel  
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis  
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,  
And tread you out for ever : but howsoe'er  
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,

Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,  
 Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,  
 Give *me* it ; *I* will give it her.'

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt  
 Full on the child ; she took it : ' Pretty bud !  
 Lily of the vale ! half open'd bell of the woods !  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part : and yet how fain was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy waxen warmth about my milkless breast  
 In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me !  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it  
 Gentle as freedom'—here she kiss'd it : then—  
 ' All good go with thee ! take it Sir' and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands  
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks ;  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,  
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,  
 And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

' We two were friends : I go to mine own land  
 For ever : find some other : as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak  
     to me,  
 Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac. 'Soul and life ! you blame the  
man ;  
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard  
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !  
I am your warrior ; I and mine have fought  
Your battle : kiss her ; take her hand, she  
weeps ;  
Life ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see  
it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,  
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said :

'I've heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word ? not one ?  
Whence drew you this steel temper ? not from  
me,  
Not from your mother now a saint with saints.  
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—  
"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she died—  
"But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still" and I—I sought for one—  
All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche : much profit ! Not one word ;  
No ! tho' your father sues : see how you stand  
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights  
maim'd,  
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim : and was it then for this,  
Was it for this we gave our palace up  
Where we withdrew from summer heats and  
state,  
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,  
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,  
Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it kind ?  
Speak to her I say : is this not she of whom,  
When first she came, all-flush'd you said to me  
Now had you got a friend of your own age,

Now could you share your thought ; now should  
men see

Two women faster welded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock ; she you walk'd with, she  
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the  
tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows what ; and  
now

A word but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her : out upon you, flint !  
You love nor her, nor me, nor any ; nay,  
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not  
one ?

You will not ? well—no heart have you, or such  
As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'  
So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force  
By many a varying influence and so long.  
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept :  
Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth  
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
In a still water : then brake out my sire  
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. ' O you,  
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
Because he might have wish'd it—but we see  
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
And think that you might mix his draught with  
death,

When your skies change again : the rougher hand  
Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince.' ~

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to  
attend  
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke  
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

‘Come hither

O Psyche,’ she cried out, ‘embrace me, come,  
Quick while I melt ; make reconciliation sure  
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :  
Come to the hollow heart they slander so !  
Kiss and be friends like children being chid !  
I seem no more : I want forgiveness too :  
I should have had to do with none but maids,  
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,  
Dear traitor too much loved, why?—why?—Yet  
see

Before these kings we embrace you yet once more  
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
And trust not love you less.

And now, O Sire,  
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,  
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it ;  
Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have  
Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids  
Till happier times each to her proper hearth :  
What use to keep them here now ? grant my  
prayer.

Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the king :  
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
Poor weakling ev’n as they are.’

Passionate tears

Follow’d : the king replied not : Cyril said :  
‘Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for him  
Of your great head—for he is wounded too—  
That you may tend upon him with the prince.’  
‘Ay so,’ said Ida with a bitter smile,  
Our laws are broken : let him enter too.’  
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song  
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
Petition’d too for him. ‘Ay so,’ she said,  
‘I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep



My heart an eddy from the brawling hour :  
We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'  
'Ay so?' said Blanche : 'Amazed am I to hear  
Your Highness : but your Highness breaks with  
ease

The law your Highness did not make : 'twas I.  
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
And block'd them out ; but these men came to  
woo

Your Highness—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :  
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but  
all,  
Not only he, but my mother's soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend, or foe,  
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,  
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
We brook no further insult but are gone.'

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck  
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince  
Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd  
Her wounded soul with words ; nor did mine own  
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave  
way

Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
The virgin marble under iron heels :  
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there  
Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,  
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd

In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
Of female whisperers : at the further end  
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
Close by her, like supporters on a shield  
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood  
The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent, save  
When armour clash'd or jingled while the day,  
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,  
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died  
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :  
And me they bore up the broad stairs and thro'  
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors  
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;  
And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times ; but some were left of those  
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,  
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

---

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,  
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give ?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd :  
I strove against the stream and all in vain :  
Let the great river take me to the main :  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;  
Ask me no more.

---

## VII

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;  
At first with all confusion : by and bye  
Sweet order lived again with other laws :  
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere  
Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they  
talk'd,  
They sang, they read : till she not fair, began  
To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.  
Old studies fail'd : seldom she spoke ; but oft  
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field : void was her use ;  
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,  
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn  
Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;  
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she  
came  
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by morn the lark  
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :  
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell ; but I  
Lay sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left  
Her child among us, willing she should keep  
Court-favour : here and there the small bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields,  
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd and she past on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
' You are not Ida ; ' clasp it once again  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
For weakness : it was evening : silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought

Two grand designs ; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd  
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,  
A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,  
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,  
The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused  
Hortensia, pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :  
Strange phantoms conjured out of circumstance,  
Ghosts of the fading brain, they seem'd ; nor more  
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder show'd : I moved : I sigh'd : a touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :  
Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,  
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly :

'If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,  
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd ; she  
    paused ;  
She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;

My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she came  
From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;  
And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out  
For worship without end ; nor end of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,  
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held  
A volume of the Poets of her land :  
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :  
The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

‘Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height :

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales  
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro’ the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.’

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay  
Listening ; then look’d. Pale was the perfect  
face ;  
The bosom with long sighs labour’d ; and meek  
Seem’d the full lips, and mild the luminous  
eyes,  
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said



Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
 In sweet humility ; had fail'd in all ;  
 That all her labour was but as a block  
 Left in the quarry ; but she still were loth,  
 She still were loth to yield herself to one,  
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights  
 Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.  
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her  
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than  
 power

In knowledge : something wild within her breast,  
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.  
 And she had nursed me there from week to week :  
 Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
 To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—  
 ' Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce !  
 When comes another such ? never, I think,  
 Till the Sun drop dead from the signs.'

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
 And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past  
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;  
 Till notice of a change in the dark world  
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
 That early woke to feed her little ones,  
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :  
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

' Blame not thyself too much,' I said, ' not  
 blame  
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;  
 These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
 The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink  
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :  
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
 Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
 How shall men grow ? but work no more alone '  
 Our place is much : as far as in us lies  
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—  
 Will clear away the parasitic forms  
 That seem to keep her up but drag her down—  
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
 Within her—let her make herself her own  
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
 For woman is not undeveloped man  
 But diverse : could we make her as the man,  
 Sweet love were slain : his dearest bond is this  
 Not like to like, but like in difference.  
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
 The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the  
     world ;  
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
 Till at the last she set herself to man,  
 Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
 Distinct in individualities,  
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men .  
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and  
     calm :  
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
 May these things be !'

Sighing she spoke ' I fear  
 They will not.'

' Dear, but let us type them now  
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies

Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
 The single pure and perfect animal,  
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke : ' A dream  
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you  
 this ?'

' Alone ' I said ' from earlier than I know,  
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world  
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :  
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one  
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
 Nor perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
 In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved  
 And girdled her with music. Happy he  
 With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things  
 high  
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall  
 He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

' But I,'  
 Said Ida, tremulously, ' so all unlike—  
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with words .  
 This mother is your model. Never, Prince ;  
 You cannot love me.'

' Nay but thee ' I said  
 ' From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes  
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and  
forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now  
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee  
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light  
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; doubt me no more ;  
Look up and let thy nature strike on mine  
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;  
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;  
In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this  
I scarce believe, and all the rich to come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
Athwart the smoke of burning leaves. Forgive me,  
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,  
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild  
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee : come,  
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :  
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.'

### CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :  
The words are mostly mine ; for when we ceased  
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,  
'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,  
'What, if you drest it up poetically!'  
So pray'd the men, the women : I gave assent :  
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven  
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?  
The men required that I should give throughout  
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :

The women—and perhaps they felt their power,  
For something in the ballads which they sang,  
Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—  
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
Not make her true-heroic, true-sublime?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd the  
grass,  
She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fixt  
A showery glance upon her aunt and said  
'You—tell us what we are' who might have told,  
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,  
But that there rose a shout : the gates were closed  
At sunset and the crowd were swarming now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy vallies half in light and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace :  
Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;  
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower  
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;  
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

‘Look there, a garden!’ said my college friend  
The Tory member’s elder son ‘and there!  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
Some patient force to change them when we will,  
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—  
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,  
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
In mock heroics stranger than our own;  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, all  
No graver than a schoolboys’ barring out;  
Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.’

‘Have patience,’ I replied, ‘ourselves are full  
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! give it time  
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.’

In such discourse we gain’d the garden rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and look’d  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder’d genial Englishman,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,

A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn ;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those  
That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
To follow : a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches of the  
deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king ! Why should not these great  
Sirs

Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd : we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man : the walls  
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls  
whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up  
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we  
went.

## IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.



Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not fear  
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

---

I

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match ?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss;  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground;  
Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast:  
'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn.'

## II

OLD Yew, which graspeth at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head;  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.  
The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.  
O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale!  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.  
And gazing on the sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood,  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?  
'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;  
A web is wov'n across the sky;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all her music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should'st fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire  
'What is it makes me beat so low ?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

## V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

ONE writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more :  
Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
That pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking 'this will please him best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
And what to me remains of good ?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me, no second friend.

## VII

DARK house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII

A HAPPY lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who lights and rings the gateway bell  
And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight ;

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying there at least may die.

## IX

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore,  
Saillest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain ; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;  
My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## x

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.  
Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.  
So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems  
To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;  
Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## xi

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; ' Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ?'  
And circle moaning in the air :  
' Is this the end ? Is this the end ?'



And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn,  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;  
Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me many years  
I do not suffer in a dream ;  
For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching sails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## xv

To-NIGHT the winds began to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day .  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world .

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## xvi

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan?

## xvii

THOU comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky;  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII

'Tis well, 'tis something, we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me :

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
    The salt sea-water passes by,  
    And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along ;  
    And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
    When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
    Is vocal in its wooded walls :  
    My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## xx

THE lesser griefs that may be said,  
    That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
    Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
    And weep the fulness from the mind .  
    ' It will be hard ' they say ' to find  
Another service such as this . '

My lighter moods are like to these,  
    That out of words a comfort win ;  
    But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
    Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
    And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
    So much the vital spirits sink  
    To see the vacant chair, and think,  
' How good ! how kind ! and he is gone . '

## XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak ;  
' This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, ' Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth, ' Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And unto one her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged ;  
And unto one her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII

THE path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold;  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip;

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste;  
And think that, somewhere in the waste,  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits;  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, how changed from where it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech:

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood :

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV

AND was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Hath stretch'd my former joy so great?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far ;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## XXV

I KNOW that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love :



Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
    When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
    The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## xxvi

STILL onward winds the dreary way ;  
    I with it ; for I long to prove  
    No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
    And goodness, and hath power to see  
    Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
    Or see (in Him is no before)  
    In more of life true life no more,  
And Love the indifference to be,

So might I find, ere yet the morn  
    Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
    That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To cloak me from my proper scorn.

## xxvii

I ENVY not in any moods  
    The captive void of noble rage,  
    The linnet born within the cage  
That never knew the summer woods .

I envy not the beast that takes  
    His license in the field of time,  
    Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
    The heart that never plighted troth  
    But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

THE time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX

WITH such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time? They too will die.

## xxx

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech .  
We heard them sweep the winter land ,  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : 'They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father ! touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days ?'  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
    Borne down by gladness so complete,  
    She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
    Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
    What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII

O THOU that after toil and storm  
    Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
    Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
    Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
    Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
    Her hands are quicker unto good.  
    Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
    In holding by the law within,  
    Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
    That life shall live for evermore,  
    Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
    Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
    In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
    'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
    Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
    Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
    To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## xxxv

YET if some voice that man could trust  
    Should murmur from the narrow house :  
    The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :

Might I not say, yet even here,  
    But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
    To keep so sweet a thing alive ?  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
    The sound of streams that swift or slow  
    Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
    'The sound of that forgetful shore  
    Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
    An idle case ? If Death were seen  
    At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
    Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
    Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where Truth in closest words shall fail,  
When Truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow :  
'Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou :

Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
'I am not worthy but to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear as sacramental wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd ;  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

## XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;



Her office there to rear, to teach,  
    Becoming as is meet and fit  
    A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
    A life that bears immortal fruit  
    In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
    How often shall her old fireside  
    Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
    And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
    Till even those that miss'd her most,  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
    Till growing winters lay me low ;  
    My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XL

THY spirit ere our fatal loss  
    Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
    As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
    And I have lost the links that bound  
    Thy changes ; here upon the ground ;  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be—  
    That I could wing my will with might  
    To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee .

For though my nature rarely yields  
    To that vague fear implied in death ;  
    Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;  
Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
    An inner trouble I behold,  
    A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,  
Tho' following with an upward mind  
    The wonders that have come to thee,  
    Thro' all the secular to be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLI

I VEX my heart with fancies dim :  
    He still outstript me in the race ;  
    It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.  
And so may Place retain us still,  
    And he the much-beloved again,  
    A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will :  
And what delights can equal those  
    That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
    When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?

## XLII

IF Sleep and Death be truly one,  
    And every spirit's folded bloom  
    Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on ;  
Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
    Bare of the body, might it last,  
    And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
    But that still garden of the souls  
    In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began :

And love would last as pure and whole  
    As when he loved me here in Time,  
    And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIII

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
    For here the man is more and more ;  
    But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
    And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
    Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
    (If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
    May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
    O turn thee round, resolve the doubt,  
    My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV

THE baby new to earth and sky,  
    What time his tender palm is prest  
    Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that 'this is I :'

But as he grows he gathers much,  
    And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
    And finds 'I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch :'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
    From whence clear memory may begin,  
    As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
    Which else were fruitless of their due,  
    Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLV

WE ranging down this lower track,  
    The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
    Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
    In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
    But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
    The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
    Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
    A bounded field, nor stretching far,  
    Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVI

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,  
    Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
    The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
    Eternal form shall still divide  
    The eternal soul from all beside ,  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good ;  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
' Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light.'

## XLVII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words ;  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me ! the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## XLIX

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust,  
And time, a maniac, scattering dust,  
And life, a Fury, slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## L

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith ?  
 There must be wisdom with great Death ;  
 The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
 With larger other eyes than ours,  
 To make allowance for us all.

## LI

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
 For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
 My words are only words, and moved  
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.  
 'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'  
 The Spirit of true love replied ;  
 'Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
 To that ideal which he bears ?  
 What record ? not the sinless years  
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue ;  
 'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
 That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
 Abide : thy wealth is gathered in,  
 When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

## LII

How many a father have I seen,  
 A sober man, among his boys,  
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
 Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give  
 That had the wild oat not been sown,  
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
 The grain by which a man may live ?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procureess to the Lords of Hell.

## LIII

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;  
That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ,  
That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.  
Behold, we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.  
So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night :  
An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

## LIV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave ;  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?



Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear ;

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God ;

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LV

'So careful of the type?' but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries 'a thousand types are gone:  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
I bring to life, I bring to death :  
The spirit does but mean the breath :  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI

PEACE, come away : the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song :  
Peace, come away ; we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly ; let us go.

Come, let us go, your cheeks are pale,  
But half my life I leave behind ;  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined  
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said  
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore !

## LVII

In those sad words I took farewell :  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
 And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : ' Wherefore grieve  
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
 Abide a little longer here,  
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LVIII

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
 She finds the baseness of her lot ;  
 Half jealous of she knows not what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
 She sighs amid her narrow days,  
 Moving about the household ways,  
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
 And tease her till the day draws by ;  
 At night she weeps, ' How vain am I !  
 How should he love a thing so low ?'

## LIX

If, in thy second state sublime,  
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
 With all the circle of the wise,  
 The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,  
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man ;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LX

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
So be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;  
And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;  
And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXI

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;  
And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy  
And I would set their pains at ease.  
So may'st thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXII

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He played at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
' Does my old friend remember me ? '

## LXIII

SWEET soul ! do with me as thou wilt  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With ' Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee,  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXIV

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXV

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the chancel like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVI

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXVII

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door.

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown.

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child.  
I found an angel of the night :  
The voice was low, the look was bright,  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :  
He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
The voice was not the voice of grief ;  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXVIII

I CANNOT see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night :  
Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;  
And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores :  
Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXIX

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went through summer France.  
Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
So bring an opiate treble-strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That thus my pleasure might be whole ;



While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXX

Rise<sup>est</sup> thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
From hill to hill, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXI

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?  
The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :  
I curse not nature ; no, nor death,  
For nothing is that errs from law.  
We pass : the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.  
O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXII

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness hardly seen before  
Comes out—to some one of his race :  
So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.  
But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXIII

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd  
    In verse that brings myself relief,  
    And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
    In fitting aptest words to things,  
    Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
    To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
    And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
    And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
    The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
    But somewhere, out of human view,  
    Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXIV

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
    And in a moment set thy face  
    Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight : lighten thro'  
    The secular abyss to come,  
    And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
    The darkness of our planet, last,  
    Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXV

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief—then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVI

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth,  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
No single tear, no type of pain :  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?  
O last regret, Regret can die !  
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXVII

' MORE than my brothers are to me'—  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
I know thee of what force thou art,  
To hold the costliest love in fee.  
But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in nature's mint ;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Through all his eddying coves ; the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXVIII

IF any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ,

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXIX

COULD I have said while he was here  
‘My love shall now no further range;  
There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear.’

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
What end is here to my complaint?  
This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
‘More years had made me love thee more.’

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
‘My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat.’

## LXXX

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
For changes wrought on form and face;  
No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks;  
And these are but the shatter'd stalks  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth:  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart;  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXI

DIP down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet new-year delaying long;  
Thou dost expectant nature wrong,  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXII

WHEN I contemplate all alone,  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee ;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest :

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,



Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And he that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that, on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXIII

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above,  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost ! O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands,  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow,

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met ;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch ;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears.  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak ;  
' Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more.'

And I, ' Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free ?  
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain ?

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
    'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
    I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
    Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
    Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
    That these things pass, and I shall prove  
    A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
    I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
    I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
    The promise of the golden hours ?  
    First love, first friendship, equal powers  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine that cannot but deplore,  
    That beats within a lonely place,  
    That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
    Quite in the love of what is gone,  
    But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
    Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
    The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXIV

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare  
The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow  
The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly  
From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

## LXXXV

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown ;  
I roved at random through the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;  
And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;  
And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about  
The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same ; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
    I linger'd ; all within was noise  
    Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band  
    Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
    And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
    But send it slackly from the string ;  
    And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he  
    Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
    We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point with power and grace,  
    And music in the bounds of law,  
    To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
    In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
    And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVI

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
    Rings Eden through the budded quicks,  
    O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
    Thy spirits in the dusking leaf,  
    And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVII

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright :  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusky purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking through the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
    Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
    And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
    Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
    Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
    He loved to rail against it still,  
    For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

And merge' he said 'in form and gloss  
    The picturesque of man and man.'  
    We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
    And last, returning from afar,  
    Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
    We heard behind the woodbine veil  
    The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## LXXXVIII

He tasted love with half his mind,  
    Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
    Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
    Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
    They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :



'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
    To pledge them with a kindly tear :  
    To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
    Behold their brides in other hands :  
    The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
    Not less the yet loved sire would make  
    Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
    Whatever change the years have wrought,  
    I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## LXXXIX

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
    And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
    Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
    Thy spirit in time among thy peers ,  
    The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
    May breathe with many roses sweet  
    Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
    But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
    Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XC

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, though it spake and made appeal  
To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.  
Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year ;  
And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,  
They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCI

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?  
No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.  
O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,  
Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCII

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits  
They can but listen at the gates  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCIII

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry;  
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:  
The brook alone far-off was heard  
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
    Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
    And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
    Of that glad year which once had been,  
    In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
    The silent-speaking words, and strange  
    Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
    On doubts that drive the coward back,  
    And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
    The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
    And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
    About empyreal heights of thought,  
    And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
    The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
    The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
    In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
    Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume ;

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

## XCIV

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
    And Power was with him in the night,  
    Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
    As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
    While Israel made their gods of gold  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## xcv

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees,  
    He finds on misty mountain-ground  
    His own vast shadow glory-crown'd,  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
    I look'd on these and thought of thee  
    In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
    Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
    Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
    The days she never can forget  
    Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
    He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
    Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
    He reads the secret of the star,  
    He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
    A wither'd violet is her bliss ;  
    She knows not what his greatness is ;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
    Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
    She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
    She darkly feels him great and wise,  
    She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
'I cannot understand : I love.'

## XCVI

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
    And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
    When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
    That City. All her splendour seems  
    No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
    Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
    I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, evil haunts  
    The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend,  
    Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
    By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
    Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
    With statelier progress to and fro  
    The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown  
  
Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
    He told me, lives in any crowd,  
    When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,  
  
Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## xcvii

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
    So loud with voices of the birds,  
    So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;  
  
Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
    On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
    By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;  
  
Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
    A song that slights the coming care,  
    And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;  
  
Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
    To myriads on the genial earth,  
    Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.  
  
O, wheresoever those may be,  
    Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
    To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.



## XCVIII

I WAKE, I rise : from end to end,  
Of all the landscape underneath  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend :

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## XCIX

UNWATCH'D the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child

As year by year the labourer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## c

WE leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
    To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
    They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CI

ON that last night before we went  
    From out the doors where I was bred,  
    I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
    And maidens with me : distant hills  
    From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
    They sang of what is wise and good  
    And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
    The shape of him I loved, and love  
    For ever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
    They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
    To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
    And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
    We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
    And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
    The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CII

THE time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CIII

THIS holly by the cottage-eave,  
To-night, ungather'd, shall it stand.  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows :  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Through which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast,  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
    Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
    Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CIV

Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,  
    The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
    The year is dying in the night ;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
    Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
    The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
    For those that here we see no more ;  
    Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
    And ancient forms of party strife ;  
    Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
    The faithless coldness of the times ;  
    Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
    The civic slander and the spite ;  
    Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
    Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
    Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CV

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.  
The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,  
And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns.  
Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;  
Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat ;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by :  
We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVI

I WILL not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CVII

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England, not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine,  
A trustful hand, unask'd in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;



All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CVIII

THY converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his treble tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CIX

THE churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To who may grasp a golden ball  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act? but he,  
    To whom a thousand memories call,  
    Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

So wore his outward best, and join'd  
    Each office of the social hour,  
    To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
    Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
    Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light,

And thus he bore without abuse  
    The grand old name of gentleman,  
    Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## cx

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
    That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
    On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
    Of all my love, art reason why  
    I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
    Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
    And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
    And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
    And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXI

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With many shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

## CXII

Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper ! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but from hour to hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXIII

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
    Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
    Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXIV

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
    That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
    And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
    The life re-orient out of dust,  
    Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
    Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
    The dear, dear voice that I have known  
Will speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
    For days of happy commune dead ;  
    Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXV

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,  
    To hold me from my proper place,  
    A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
    Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
    And unto meeting, when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
    And every span of shade that steals,  
    And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVI

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead,  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ,  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXVII

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
    Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
    A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee.

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland  
    And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
    And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXVIII

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :  
    I think we are not wholly brain,  
    Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
    Let Science prove we are, and then  
    What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
    Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
    His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## CXIX

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun  
    And ready, thou, to die with him,  
    Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
    The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
    Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
    By thee the world's great work is heard  
    Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXX

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow ;  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXI

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.



The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXII

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
But that blind clamour made me wise ;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I seem beheld again  
What is, and no man understands ;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXIII

WHATEVER I have said or sung,  
    Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
    Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,  
Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;  
    She did but look thro' dimmer eyes ;  
    Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :  
And if the song were full of care,  
    He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
    And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there ;  
Abiding with me till I sail  
    To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
    And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXIV

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
    And in his presence I attend  
    To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.  
Love is and was my King and Lord,  
    And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
    Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,  
And hear at times a sentinel  
    That moves about from place to place,  
    And whispers to the vast of space  
Among the worlds, that all is well.

## CXXV

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
    Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
    Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the vast Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell,  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVI

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade ;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new,  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil cōoperant to an end.

## CXXVII

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
 O, loved the most when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown, human, divine !  
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye,  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine !

Strange friend, past, present, and to be,  
 Loved deeper, darker understood ;  
 Behold I dream a dream of good  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXVIII

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
 I hear thee where the waters run ;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
 My love is vaster passion now ;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXIX

O LIVING will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,  
That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust  
With faith that comes of self-control  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

---

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.  
Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this ;  
Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years : they went and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more ;  
No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
    Than in the summers that are flown,  
    For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
    As echoes out of weaker times,  
    As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
    That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
    She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
    And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
    And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
    He too foretold the perfect rose.  
    For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
    As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
    Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
    And I must give away the bride ;  
    She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,  
    That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
    That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

## IN MEMORIAM

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
They rise but linger, it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three times three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,



The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

## WILL

### 1

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :  
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

### 2

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

## MAUD

### I

#### 1

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red  
    heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of  
    blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers  
    'Death.'

#### 2

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was  
    found,  
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was  
    it well?—  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into  
    the ground :  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he  
    fell.

#### 3

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast  
    speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd  
    with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken  
    worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove  
    thro' the air.

## 4

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were  
stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a  
whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my  
heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the  
shuddering night.

## 5

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are  
villains all.  
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be  
maintain'd:  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and  
the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us  
flaccid and drain'd.

## 6

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have  
made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not  
its own;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or  
worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his  
own hearthstone?

## 7

But these are the days of advance, the works of the  
men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's  
ware or his word?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of  
a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the  
sword.

## 8

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope  
nor trust;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a  
flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are  
ashes and dust.

## 9

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days  
gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together,  
each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all  
men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges  
the wine.

## 10

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's  
head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled  
wife,  
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor  
for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means or  
life.

## 11

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous  
centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless  
nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps,  
as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

## 12

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a  
burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's  
bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land  
and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred  
thrones.

## 13

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by  
the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-  
decker out of the foam,  
That the smoothfaced snubnosed rogue would leap  
from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating  
yardwand, home.—

## 14

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his  
mood?  
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down  
and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore  
to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched  
swindler's lie?

## 15

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the  
passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to  
the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would  
rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used  
to rave.

## 16

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the  
moor and the main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come  
to me here?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves  
of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit  
and the fear?

## 17

There are workmen up at the Hall: they are coming  
back from abroad;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a  
millionnaire:  
I have heard, I know not whence, or the singular  
beauty of Maud;  
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised  
then to be fair.

## 18

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and  
childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of  
the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father  
dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced  
darling of all,—

## 19

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may  
bring me a curse.  
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let  
me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or  
man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may  
pipe to his own.

## II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find  
it at last !  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither  
savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her  
carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is  
the fault ?  
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be  
seen)  
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had  
not been  
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of  
the rose,  
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,  
too full,  
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive  
nose,  
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little  
touch of spleen.

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly  
meek,  
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was  
drown'd,  
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on  
the cheek,  
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom  
profound ;  
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient  
wrong  
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as  
pale as before  
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a  
sound,



Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the  
    night long  
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it  
    no more,  
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden  
    ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung ship-  
    wrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down  
    by the wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and  
    found  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV

## 1

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot  
    I be  
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful  
    season bland,  
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a  
    softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent  
    of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the  
    land?

## 2

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet  
    and small!  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal,  
    and spite;  
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as  
    a Czar;

And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers  
the Hall ;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like  
a light ;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading  
star !

## 3

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head  
of the race ?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her  
brother I bow'd ;  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful  
face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being  
so proud ;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless  
and poor.

## 4

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander  
and steal ;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic,  
or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher  
can heal ;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow  
spear'd by the shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of  
plunder and prey.

## 5

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair  
in her flower ;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen  
hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever  
succeed ?

Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an  
hour ;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a  
brother's shame ;  
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## 6

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of  
Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing  
ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's  
crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for  
his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone to the making  
of man :  
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too  
base?

## 7

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and  
vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded  
and poor ;  
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly  
and vice.  
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate  
brain ;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it,  
were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a  
garden of spice.

## 8

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by  
the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will  
bring them about?

Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is  
wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a  
Hungary fail?  
Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with  
knout?  
I have not made the world, and He that made it will  
guide.

## 9

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland  
ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be  
my lot,  
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub  
of lies;  
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever  
hissing dispraise  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he  
heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of  
poisonous flies.

## 10

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness  
of love,  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless  
ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet  
for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in  
marble above;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at  
your will;  
You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies  
of life.

## V

## 1

A voice by the cedar tree,  
In the meadow under the Hall !  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call !  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

## 2

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and  
mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

## 3

Silence, beautiful voice !  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still ! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI

## 1

MORNING arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
I had fancied it would be fair.

## 2

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet ?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

## 3

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

## 4

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## 5

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## 6

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## 7

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

## 8

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## 9

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else with me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## 10

I have play'd with her when a child;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.



## VII

## 1

DID I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair?

## 2

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy,  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

## 3

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

## 4

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy,  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

## VIII

SHE came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd  
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX

I WAS walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone :  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
And back returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

## X

## 1

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grand-father has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his geegaw castle shine,

New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## 2

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he;  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## 3

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,  
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:  
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,  
Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

## 4

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy !  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

## 5

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

## 6

And ah for a man to rise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

## XI

## 1

O LET the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## 2

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me ;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

## XII

## 1

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

## 2

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

## 3

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the vallies,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

## 4

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately ;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

## 5

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour !  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

## 6

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## 7

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,  
One is come to woo her ?

## 8

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charles is snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII

## 1

SCORN'D, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride !  
I past him, I was crossing his lands ;  
He stood on the path a little aside ;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## 2

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## 3

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
That old man never comes to his place :  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin :  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## 4

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV

## 1

MAUD has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate ;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## 2

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books,  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden gate :  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,  
to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to  
my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## 3

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.



## 4

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I  
    beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn ;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but  
    sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the  
    sleep of death.

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else  
    Then some one else may have much to fear ;  
But if I be dear to some one else,  
    Then I should be to myself more dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else.

## XVI

## 1

THIS lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
And so that he find what he went to seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week .  
But this is the day when I must speak,

And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day !  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way ;  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,  
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty might half undo it.  
I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## 2

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
Dare I bid her abide by her word ?  
Should I love her so well if she  
Had given her word to a thing so ?  
Shall I love her as well if she  
Can break her word were it even for me ?  
I trust that it is not so.

## 3

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye  
For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,

Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.  
When the happy Yes  
Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
O'er the blowing ships.  
Over blowing seas,  
Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
Blush it thro' the West;  
Till the red man dance  
By his red cedar tree,  
And the red man's babe  
Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII

## 1

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## 2

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once more  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

## 3

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she  
came.

## 4

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

## 5

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

## 6

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## 7

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.

## 8

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight  
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, and ownest own, farewell ;  
It is but for a little space I go  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow

Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?  
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can  
 tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
 That seems to draw—but it shall not be so :  
 Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

## 1

HER brother is coming back to-night,  
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

## 2

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
 O when did a morning shine  
 So rich in atonement as this  
 For my dark-dawning youth,  
 Darken'd watching a mother decline  
 And that dead man at her heart and mine :  
 For who was left to watch her but I?  
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## 3

I trust that I did not talk  
 To gentle Maud in our walk  
 (For often in lonely wanderings  
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
 But I trust that I did not talk,  
 Not touch on her father's sin :  
 I am sure I did but speak  
 Of my mother's faded cheek  
 When it slowly grew so thin,  
 That I felt she was slowly dying  
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :

For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within !

## 4

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death  
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

## 5

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :  
And none of us thought of a something beyond,  
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;  
And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

## 6

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## 7

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

## 8

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind ; why, let it be so :  
For shall not Maud have her will ?

## 9

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay ;



And if ever I should forget  
 That I owe this debt to you  
 And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
 O then, what then shall I say ?—  
 If ever I *should* forget,  
 May God make me more wretched  
 Than ever I have been yet !

## 10

So now I have sworn to bury  
 All this dead body of hate,  
 I feel so free and so clear  
 By the loss of that dead weight,  
 That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
 Fantastically merry ;  
 But that her brother comes, like a blight  
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

## XX

## 1

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,  
 Strange, that I tried to-day  
 To beguile her melancholy ;  
 The Sultan, as we name him,—  
 She did not wish to blame him—  
 But he vexed her and perplexed her  
 With his worldly talk and folly :  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claims her as his due ?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,

Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer ;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

## 2

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near ;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## 3

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## 4

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

## XXI

RIVULET crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea ;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, ' Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night.'

## XXII

## 1

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.

## 2

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## 3

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;

All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon.

## 4

I said to the lily, ' There is but one  
 With whom she has heart to be gay.  
 When will the dancers leave her alone?  
 She is weary of dance and play.'  
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day ;  
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
 The last wheel echoes away.

## 5

I said to the rose, ' The brief night goes  
 In babble and revel and wine.  
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
 For one that will never be thine?  
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
 ' For ever and ever, mine.'

## 6

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall ;  
 And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## 7

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise.

## 8

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## 9

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

## 10

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
The red rose cries, ' She is near, she is near ;  
And the white rose weeps, ' She is late ; '  
The larkspur listens, ' I hear, I hear ; '  
And the lily whispers, ' I wait.'

## 11

She is coming, my own, my sweet ,  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead ;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## XXIII

## 1

‘THE fault was mine, the fault was mine—  
Why am I sitting here so stunn’d and still,  
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—  
It is this guilty hand!—  
And there rises ever a passionate cry  
From underneath in the darkening land—  
What is it, that has been done?  
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
The fires of Hell and of Hate;  
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate  
He came with the babe-faced lord;  
Heap’d on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
He fiercely gave me the lie,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by:  
Struck for himself an evil stroke;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe  
For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
From the red-ribb’d hollow behind the wood,  
And thunder’d up into Heaven the Christless code,  
That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem’d to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?  
‘The fault was mine,’ he whisper’d, ‘fly!’  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother’s blood:  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die,  
till I die.

## 2

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with deluging  
    storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous  
    worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust:  
We are not worthy to live.

## XXIV

## 1

SEE what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

## 2

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## 3

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door

Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

## 4

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand!

## 5

Breton, not Briton; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

## 6

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.



## 7

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still ;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## 8

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so over-wrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by !  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
It is his mother's hair.

## 9

Who knows if he be dead ?  
Whether I need have fled ?  
Am I guilty of blood ?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
While I am over the sea !  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and high,  
Whatever happen to me !  
Me and my harmful love go by ;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

## XXV

COURAGE, poor heart of stone  
 I will not ask thee why  
 Thou canst not understand  
 That thou art left for ever alone :  
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
 Or if I ask thee why,  
 Care not thou to reply :  
 She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
 When thou shalt more than die.

## XXVI

## 1

O THAT 'twere possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again !

## 2

When I was wont to meet her  
 In the silent woody places  
 By the home that gave me birth,  
 We stood tranced in long embraces  
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
 Than anything on earth.

## 3

A shadow flits before me,  
 Not thou, but like to thee ;  
 Ah Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might  
     tell us  
 What and where they be.

## 4

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## 5

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## 6

"Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
"Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow,  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## 7

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?

But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

## 8

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain  
Pass and cease to move about,  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

## 9

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapours choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## 10

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## 11

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## 12

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest'?

## 13

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

## XXVII

## 1

DEAD, long dead,  
Long dead !  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,

For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,  
And here beneath it is all as bad,  
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so ;  
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?  
But up and down and to and fro,  
Ever about me the dead men go ;  
And then to hear a dead man chatter  
Is enough to drive one mad.

## 2

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
They cannot even bury a man ;  
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,  
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;  
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the  
dead ;  
There is none that does his work, not one ;  
A touch of their office might have sufficed,  
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## 3

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress ;  
And another, a lord of all things, praying  
To his own great self, as I guess ;  
And another, a statesman there, betraying  
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient—all for what ?  
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## 4

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
For the prophecy given of old  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold ;  
Not let any man think for the public good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the  
house ;  
Everything came to be known :  
Who told *him* we were there ?

## 5

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to  
lie ;  
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to  
crack ;  
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

## 6

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;  
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,  
But I know that he lies and listens mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls !  
It is all used up for that.

## 7

Tell him now ; she is standing here at my head ;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
He may take her now ; for she never speaks her mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.

She is not of us, as I divine ;  
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,  
Stillier, not fairer than mine.

## 8

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season is good,  
To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;  
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride ;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,  
Would he have had that hole in his side?

## 9

But what will the old man say ?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;  
Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;  
For what will the old man say  
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

## 10

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

## 11

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?



Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb :  
I will cry to the steps above my head,  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## XXVIII

## 1

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :  
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the  
    blest,  
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming  
    wars—  
' And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## 2

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright ;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of  
    the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :  
No more shall commerce be all in all and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,

And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## 3

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and  
true),  
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## 4

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and  
shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall  
weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring  
claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and  
done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic  
deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## 5

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a  
 wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are  
 noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better  
 mind;  
 It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my  
 kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

## THE BROOK;

## AN IDYL

'HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East  
 And he for Italy—too late—too late:  
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent;  
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then; but life in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
 And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says,  
 'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,  
 'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not?  
 replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;  
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child !  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
For here I came, twenty years back—the week  
Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,  
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
Stuck ; and he clamour'd from a casement, "Run"  
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
"Run, Katie !" Katie never ran : she moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense  
Had Katie ; not illiterate ; neither one  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd.  
Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;  
James had no cause : but when I prest the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.  
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
If James were coming. "Coming every day,"  
She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;  
And James departed vext with him and her."  
How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"  
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)  
"O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!  
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm : full willingly he rose .  
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes  
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;  
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :  
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took  
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :  
Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :  
"That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."  
And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He gave them line : and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something more,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;  
He gave them line : and how by chance at last  
(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,  
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,  
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,  
And following our own shadows thrice as long  
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,  
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers ;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows ;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;  
I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a style  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the  
farm?'



'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little: pardon me;

What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.

What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my name.'

'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,  
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
My brother James is in the harvest-field:  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!'

## THE LETTERS

### I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow;  
'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

## 2

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,  
And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
We met, but only meant to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colours I approved.

## 3

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me.  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## 4

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I raged against the public liar ;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
'No more of love ; your sex is known .  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

## 5

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell  
(And women's slander is the worst),  
And you, whom once I loved so well,  
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

## 6

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;  
'Dark porch' I said 'and silent aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## ODE ON THE DEATH

## OF

## THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

## 1

BURY the Great Duke  
With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty  
nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

## 2

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

## 3

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow ;  
The last great Englishman is low.

## 4

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
 Remembering all his greatness in the Past.  
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :  
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
 Whole in himself, a common good.  
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
 Great in council and great in war,  
 Foremost captain of his time,  
 Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And, as the greatest only are,  
 In his simplicity sublime.  
 O good gray head which all men knew,  
 O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that  
     blew !  
 Such was he whom we deplore.  
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen  
     no more.

## 5

All is over and done :  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 England, for thy son.  
 Let the bell be toll'd.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 And render him to the mould.  
 Under the cross of gold  
 That shines over city and river,  
 There he shall rest for ever  
 Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds :  
Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;  
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;  
When he with those deep voices wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;  
With those deep voices our dead captain taught  
The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

## 6

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,  
With banner and with music, with soldier and  
with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my  
rest?  
Mighty seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,  
The greatest sailor since our world began.  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,

To thee the greatest soldier comes ;  
 For this is he  
 Was great by land as 'thou by sea ;  
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
 O give him welcome, this is he,  
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
 And worthy to be laid by thee ;  
 For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Past the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,  
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;  
 A day of onsets of despair !  
 Dash'd on every rocky square  
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away,  
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;

Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.  
So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo !  
Mighty seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all,  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !  
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## 7

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.  
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;  
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul  
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
That sober freedom out of which there springs

Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march of mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts ;  
 He bad you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent ; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
 Who never spoke against a foe ;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right :  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed.

## 8

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state.  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-story,



The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outred  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he : his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;  
Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory :  
And let the land whose hearths he saved from  
shame  
For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## 9

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung :

O peace, it is a day of pain  
 For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain  
 Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
 More than is of man's degree  
 Must be with us, watching here  
 At this, our great solemnity.  
 Whom we see not we revere.  
 We revere, and we refrain  
 From talk of battles loud and vain,  
 And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane :  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,  
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
 Until we doubt not that for one so true  
 There must be other nobler work to do  
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
 And Victor he must ever be.  
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
 And break the shore, and evermore  
 Make and break, and work their will ;  
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
 Round us, each with different powers,  
 And other forms of life than ours,  
 What know we greater than the soul ?  
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.  
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :  
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :  
 The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
 Of the force he made his own  
 Being here, and we believe him  
 Something far advanced in state,  
 And that he wears a truer crown  
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.

But speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

### THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
    In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
    How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
    To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
    Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
    Now watching high on mountain cornice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
    I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;

But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;

Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;

And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,

A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;

What drives about the fresh Cascine,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,

Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;

Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ,  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;

Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splugen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nurseling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

## TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
God-father, come and see your boy :  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who gave the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-councils  
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome  
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You 'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

*January 1854.*

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

### 1

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
'Forward, the Light Brigade !  
'Charge for the guns !' he said :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### 2

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'  
Was there a man dismay'd ?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd .  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.



## 3

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
    Rode the six hundred.

## 4

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
    All the world wonder'd :  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke ;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
    Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
    Not the six hundred.

## 5

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
    Left of six hundred.

6

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!



